

MECHA

PRESS

• VOTOMS EPISODE GUIDE

• VICTORY GUNDAM
MODEL REVIEWS

• HORIZON'S MADCAT
PART II

• OGRE:
CYBERWALKERS

• BATTLETECH:
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VOTOMS

13

• ARMORED TROOPER VOTOMS

• BASICS OF MECHA MODELING

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For more information, call, write or E-mail:

IANUS PUBLICATIONS, Inc.
5000 Iberville, Suite 332
Montreal, Quebec, Canada, H2H 2S6
Phone: (514) 523-1350 Fax: (514) 523-8680
E-mail: dp9@vectrex.login.qc.ca

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S T A F F

Publisher/Art Director
Pierre Ouellette

Editor-in-chief
Marc-Alexandre Vézina

Production Staff
Dominique Durocher ... Illustrator/Modeler/Writer
Martin Ouellette ... Writer/Modeler
Ghislain Barbe ... Illustrator
Marc-Alex Vézina ... Writer/Modeler

Contributors
Gene Marcell ... Writer
Stéphane Matis ... Writer
Prabal Nandy ... Writer
Bryant Velez ... Illustrator

Layout
Dominique Durocher

Proofreading
Jean Carrières, Judith Lanouette
Jimmy Mah

Translators
Miyako Graham, Daishi Saeki

Administration
Robert Dubois (advertising)
Claude J. Pelletier (distribution)

Photography
Elie Charest, Dominique Durocher
Marc-Alex Vézina

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5000, D'Iberville St., Suite 332,
Montréal, Qc., Canada, H2H 2S6

S P E C I A L T H A N K S

Ron ... (GTC)
Dany Gagnon ... (LE VALET D'COEUR)
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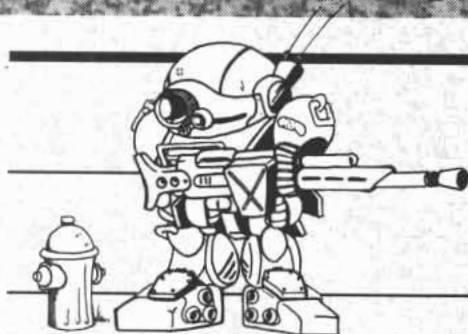
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ABOVE AND BEYOND

Ever since ancient times, Man has tried to get past his natural limits and make himself better, faster, stronger, more intelligent. This is an aspiration shared by all: how many times have we heard someone sigh "I wish I could do that". The only path to improvement was practice and dedication, and even then it was sometimes not enough to attain the goal we sought for ourselves.

Now, modern science has given us new ways to improve our body and our mind. From the common, harmless "Brainbooster" vitamin cocktail served at raves to the more dangerous steroids used by athletes seeking an extra edge, drugs have been used for years. There are even drugs to modify our mental state (look at the much-publicised Prozac controversy). They are generally efficient, but short and long-term use take a terrible toll on the user: side-effects, addiction and cellular damage.

Many games and science-fiction worlds proposed cybernetics as an alternative to further improve Man's body and mind. We all saw The Six Million Dollars Man, or the various cyberpunk games. The problem is that machines do break down. Also, we must consider a social and psychological fact: where does the human stop and where does the machine begin? Still, cybernetics remain a popular alternative to mere human abilities.

The last and most common way to the Übermensch (German for super man) is genetic engineering. By manipulating the DNA of the human body — the pattern stored in all of our cells — we can create a human which is stronger, faster, more intelligent. The concept of the super-soldier has been showcased in several places, including this month's highlight, Armored Trooper VOTOMS. Mobile Suit Gundam also had them, in the form of the Artificial Newtypes (Zeta Gundam and up). Likewise, we wanted to explore the concept so we introduced it into our own game, Heavy Gear.

We wanted to explore the genetic-improved human because this method has the biggest repercussions on all of mankind. Any quality — or defect — we choose to give to our supermen will be transferred to future generations. This has caused many headaches to ethics specialists, and we thought that the phenomenon was very worthy of being included in Heavy Gear.

All this forces us to ask several questions about ourselves: how far are we willing to go? Is it really worth the price? In today's highly competitive world, Mankind, more than ever, wants to get ahead, to get better. Pushing past one's limitations is a commendable goal, but only as long as we are careful, in the race to outrun our shortcomings, not to leave our humanity behind.

Marc-Alexandre Vézina

Marc-Alexandre Vézina

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COVER ART

Alexandre Racine (Art)
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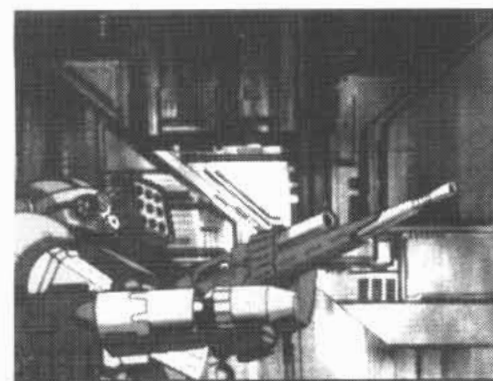
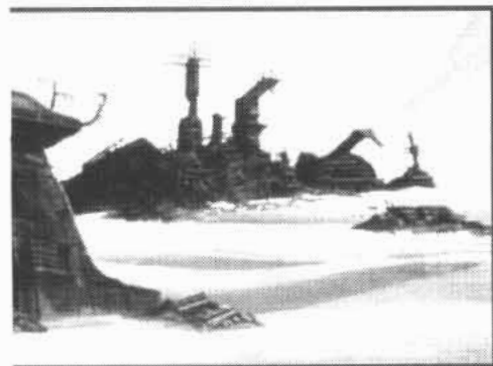
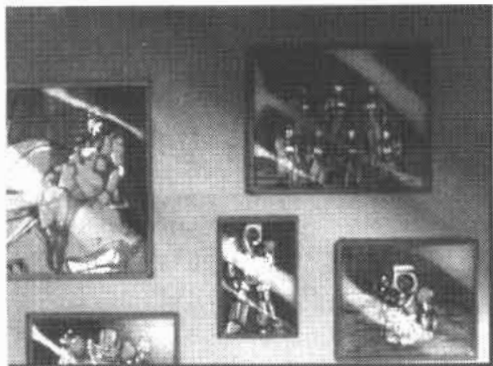
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ENTERTAINMENT BIBLE #5 (VOTOMS).
HOBBY JAPAN BLUE KNIGHT II: IN THE 3D WORLD.
OHMU WAR MACHINE.
All other illustrations came from promotional artwork, cover art or directly from the animation (video grabs).

WHAT'S VOTOMS

by Martin Ouellette



In the 1970's, the Gaudy Robot superteams reigned supreme over the robot kingdom. *Mazinger*, *Grandizer*, *Combattler V* and company were the masters of science-fiction oriented Japanese animation (yes, *Captain Harlock* was there, but not as visible as the giant robots) and that was the way the toy makers and merchandisers wanted it. Then, in 1979, *Kidou Senshi Gundam* (*Mobile Suit Gundam*) appeared with its realistic robots and characters, as well as its gripping story.

From there, the concept of the giant robot changed completely. The robot, from hero of the story, was now only a machine to further the desires of its user, just like a plane or tank; a bucket of bolts, nuts, alloy and plastic. Yoshiyuki Tomino's realistic robot war tale inspired a young director, Takahashi Ryoussuke, to create a series that would go further in the same vein. Named *Taiyo Nokiba Dougram* (*Fang of the Sun Dougram*), it was successful, but did not satisfy Takahashi as far as its character development was concerned. He wanted something more studied, with an evolution in the character's personality. This is when the concept of **Armored Trooper VOTOMS** appeared. The difference between *Dougram* and **VOTOMS** was staggering. Instead of showing the hardship of a group of characters, Takahashi's story concentrated on one character, Chirico Cuvie.

All **VOTOMS** is based on one question: if a soldier knows nothing but war all his life, what happens to him when the war ends and he must rejoin society (as formulated by writer and artist Tim Eldred)? Takahashi thought it would be nice to give the feel of *Blade Runner* to the setting of his story and this is when the idea of the Perfect Soldier (an artificial being created for war) came to him. After a lot of work and character development, this Perfect Soldier became Chirico Cuvie.

Through his eyes and experiences, **Armored Trooper VOTOMS** was not only a war/robot story, it became Takahashi's vision of what war is: cruel, vicious and driven by men hungry for power and obsessed with domination. In a certain way, **VOTOMS** is probably one of the most realistic war stories in anime and is the proof of Takahashi's fantastic talent in the field. He recently worked on *Kidou Senshi Gundam 0083: Stardust Memories* and a new installment of **Armored Trooper VOTOMS** is now out. Wonder what will happen to Chirico this time?

PALLADIUM BOOKS

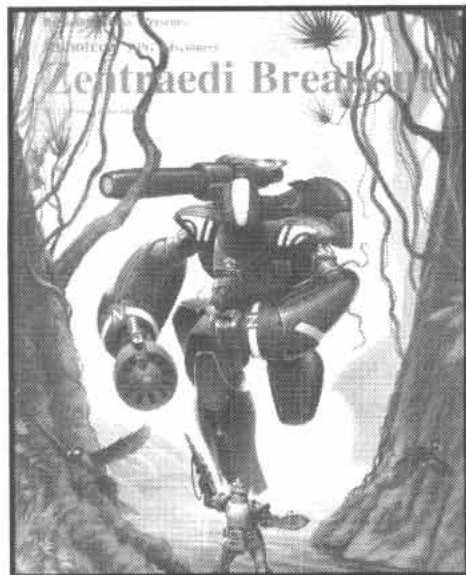
• Palladium Books just announced the third Rifts™ sourcebook, **Mindwerks**. This 112-page book presents the techno-horror of the Mindwerks Corporation, plus new races, more information on the NGR, the Gargoyle and the Brodki Empires.

In addition to this, the book introduces several new war machines, robots, weapons, and new O.C.C. for players to use and fight against.

Mindwerks, written by Kevin Siembieda, 112 pages, published by Palladium Books.

• The sixth Rifts™ world book is on the way. Called **Mercenaries**, the book explores the conflicts and intrigues in and around the Coalition States. As usual, the book includes lots of new robots, weapons and equipment, plus new characters and adventure ideas.

Rifts™ World Book Six: Mercenaries, written by C.J. Carella and Kevin Siembieda, 208 pages, published by Palladium Books.



• **Robotech: Zentraedi Breakout** is now available. This book is the first Robotech adventure sourcebook in three years, and the first of a new line of Robotech books.

Zentraedi Breakout covers the time period between Macross and Southern Cross, better known by Robotech fans as the Malcontent Uprising (by the comic book of the same name).

Robotech: Zentraedi Breakout, written by Kevin Siembieda and Deborah Christian, 64 pages, published by Palladium Books.

WIN A MADCAT! CONTEST EXTENDED!

Mecha Press/Horizon Hobbies' *Win a Madcat!* contest has been extended because of the insufficient number of responses(!). You now have until September 1st, 1994 to send us a letter where you outline your favorite modeling trick in about a hundred words or less; yes, it's that easy! On this date, one (1) letter will be drawn and the lucky winner will receive a signed copy of the big vinyl Madcat kit by Horizon.

Don't miss out! Once it's gone, it's gone forever...



MARAUDER 2107

Marauder 2107 is a new roleplaying game published by Maelstrom Hobbies, a young California-based game company. The 128-page book has been available since early 1994 and offers a cyberpunk world with a touch of manga inspiration, set in the Japan of the 22nd century. The "Marauder" of the title refers to the police powersuit used throughout the game.

Marauder 2107 will be reviewed in Mecha Press #15.

Marauder 2107, written by Delbert Laird and Christina Laird, 128 pages, published by Maelstrom Hobby.

SSG LOOKING FOR PLAYTESTERS

Seventh Street Games needs playtesters for new rules changes for the next edition of **Mecha!**. Those who wish to participate must own a copy of **Mecha!** and a supply of **Battlepoles**.

Playtesters are given a 50% discount on **Mecha!**, **Spirit Warrior Empire**, **Spirit Warrior models**, and **Battlepoles** in order to facilitate their efforts. They will also be sent new material as it is developed.

"We listen to our customers and playtesters — your input will change our upcoming games."

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MACROSS II: DECK PLANS VOLUME II

Part II of the Deck Plans book series is on the way. This book presents the remaining capital ships used by the UN Spacy and the Marduk. The book includes ships such as the UNS Battleship, UNS Command Carrier, UNS Corvette, Zentrion Flagship and the Zentrion Carrier. The Marduk are not forgotten with the inclusion of the Destroyer, Scout Ship and the terrifying Marduk Dreadnought! Included are full stats and deck plans, as well as crew and mecha complements, and a short adventure ("All That Glitters...") that's guaranteed to shake your players' beliefs!

Macross II: Deck Plans Volume II, written by the Dream Pod 9 team, 64 pages, published by Palladium Books.

JOVIAN CHRONICLES

Jovian Chronicles fans can turn to page 42 for an extract from the **Jovian Confederation Sourcebook**, which is presently in writing. All of the main factions of the Solar System will have one such sourcebook dedicated exclusively to them, with in-depth information on culture, economy, and social and military organization.

As of this time, the following books are in the works: **Jovian Confederation**, **Central Earth Government and Administration**, **Venus** and the **Nomads Sourcebook**. A Mars sourcebook and a technical report book were also proposed.

IANUS WINS GRAPHIC DESIGN AWARD

On June 8th, Designer Pierre Ouellette and graphic artist Jeff Fortier won the Silver Pixel in the renowned Canadian Graphic Design Award Pixel D'Or for their work on the cover of **Remember Me?**. This shows very well Ianus Publications' dedication to offer the best presentation for its products and always improve their quality. Congratulations to Pierre and Jeff for their work!

HEAVY GEAR FIGHTER: BADLANDS DUEL

Card Fighter™ is the name of the original card combat system from Dream Pod 9. The system, written by Jean Carrières, was developed and playtested in numerous conventions over the last two years and is now ready for official release!

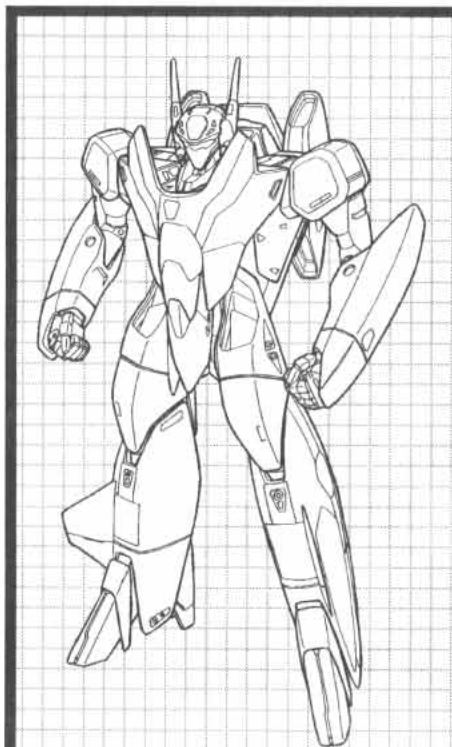
Card Fighter™ games are not collector card games; each game is packaged in an easy-to-carry plastic case which contains everything you need to play, making additional money expenses unnecessary.

Heavy Gear Fighter: Badlands Duels™ is the first **Card Fighter™** combat game. It uses the various mecha from Dream Pod 9's **Heavy Gear** science-fiction universe. It is a 2 player game with 8 Gear cards and over a 100 playing cards, all in full color on quality stock. Everything needed to play is included in the box!

The playing cards themselves are in full color and feature a *Jaguar*, one of the most common Heavy Gear. Additional sets of playing cards featuring the other Gears of the game will be published later, allowing players to use a deck with their favorite vehicle! In addition, new optional cards will be found in the various **Heavy Gear** books.

HGF can be used with the **Heavy Gear** Roleplaying Game or on its own. Characters from the RPG can be used in **Heavy Gear Fighter**, and the Silhouette™ statistics of the machine are printed on the reverse side of the mecha cards!

The game is coming your way August 1994. Not to be missed!



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THE ARMORED TROOPER

By Martin Ouellette

Although the workings of the mecha are usually esoteric (a.k.a. "It's Magic!"), it is not the case with the armored troopers. The technology used to build them is in use right now or in development. This is especially true of the "myomers" (the "muscle cylinders" of the AT use this principle) and Virtual Reality (the "visor").

Structure

It is composed of two different frames bolted together. The interior frame is composed of the "muscle cylinders" (see *Technology*) and electric motors assembly. The muscle cylinders, as their name indicates, are a mechanical version of the human muscle and are quite similar to the myomer fibers (polymer fibers that contract when electricity is conducted through them). Muscle cylinders have the aspect of hydraulic actuators, but are filled with a polymer liquid which contracts when electrified. This system has three major advantages: it has a fast reaction time, is very powerful, and feeds back electricity when moved from outside (the piezo-electric phenomenon). Thus, when two cylinders activate one joint, the one not supplying the brute force is recharging the AT's battery to feed the electronic system and sensor array.

Unfortunately, the cylinders have disadvantages too. The polymer liquid has a very short useful lifespan. Its molecular structure breaks down when in use, which means that the liquid must be changed after a certain number of activity hours.

The more performing machines have a shorter lifespan due to the higher stress (often less than a hundred hours, opposed to nearly three hundred for a standard model). The liquid also needs a complex network of small compressors to make it circulate freely, a system which is relatively fragile and hard to maintain in good order.

Only the limbs of the AT use this system, the rest of the articulations being moved by electric motors. These are connected to the exterior frame on which all the other AT systems are attached. The exterior

frame is also the armor ("stressed skin" engineering), composed of light metal alloy and ceramic and similar to the "chobam" armor used by modern tanks such as the M1A1 Abraham.

Control systems

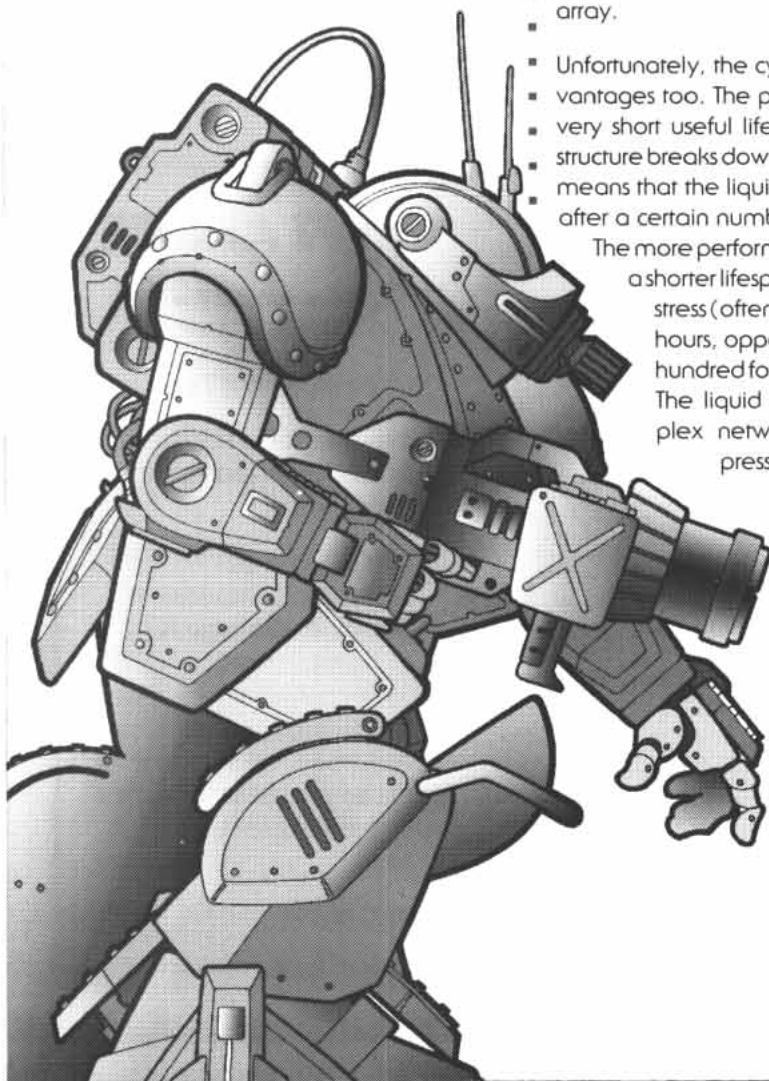
The most important control system of the AT is the mission disk unit, which works about the same way as a CD ROM computer. The disk contains all the necessary calculations for the machine's movements on a certain type of terrain (the "Desert" disk does not contain the same information than the "Space" disk, for example). All movements are initiated via hand controls and foot pedals except for the head, which is slaved to the motion of the helmer of the pilot. The second most important system is known simply as the visor. The front of the AT's head is covered with a mobile faceplate on which an array of lens are mounted. The lens package is mounted on a rail, allowing it to swivel left and right in a ninety degrees arc. The pilot is fed the visual info through a set of goggles linked to the sensor unit.

The optic information is passed on to the main computer via an optic processor, then adjusted with the parameters found on the mission disk currently used to allow body motions. The computers used in the AT are multi-processors. Jijirium crystals are a major component of the chips used in these computers.

Sensors

ATs use two kinds of sensor: active and passive. Active sensors include sonar and radar units. The radar is usually installed in the chest, with the whole torso being used as receiver. Sonar units, mounted on aquatic ATs, use Jijirium crystals to generate the sonar pulse.

The passive sensors are more numerous and are generally head-mounted. They include infra-red sensors, metal detector and a MAD (Magnetic Anomaly Detection) unit (on the Scopedog, this is mounted in the "collar"). A wide-angle and a telescopic camera, along with microphones and loudspeakers, are also



part of the sensor package. Custom ATs usually have additional Doppler effect detectors. Active sensors are rarely used because they tend to give away the scanning unit's position.

Communication

For very close range, a PCM transceiver is located in the lens package on the head of the AT. Usual radio communication are made via the 220 MHz VHF band, with a range of about 50 km. If the terrain is rugged (such as mountain, city), a magnetic transceiver can also be used, although its range is poor (500 meters maximum).

Weaponry

Since the ATs are, technically, oversized human soldiers, it is only normal that a lot of their weapons are only larger versions of the infantry weapons. The most widely known is the Gilgamesh/Merukian GAT-22 30mm rifle cannon, which is used as standard armament by the Scopedog-class ATs. Highly adaptable and modular, this gun can be fitted with a variety of attachments and uses an ammo canister containing 120 shells (a 'dog usually carries three canisters on his back and one in the gun). A shortened version called GAT-22C is used by the Marshydog and commando ATs.

Other rifle cannons used include the GAT-19 and GAT-49. The Balalant army seems to use the G-BATM-04 gunpod as a standard AT hand weapon. Bazookas are also very popular with the Gilgamesh/Merukian army, which uses the X-SAT-01 or the SAT-03 very often, while the Balalants don't seem to rely on such weapons. A vast number of rocket/misile launchers are in service in both armies, but are rarely used on ATs as they are cumbersome. Grenades and mines can also be used by Armored Troopers.

The Armored Punch is the standard hand-to-hand weapon and functions like a construction stud driver gun. A blank cartridge is fired, the explosive force driving the hand of the AT forward with immense force and speed. When the fist

recoils back, the cartridge is ejected and a new one is fed in its place. A variation of the armored punch is called the pile driver: instead of pushing the fist forward, the charge drives a wicked metal spike. This deadly weapon is often seen on battle rings machines. The pile guns mounted in the feet of the ATs probably inspired the pile driver.

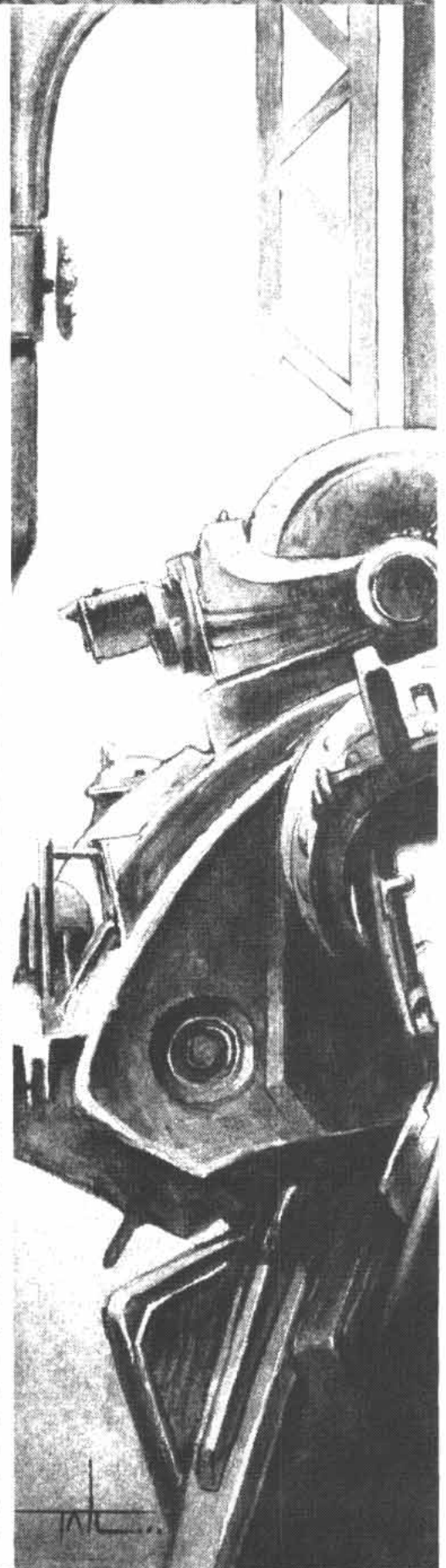
Special Equipment

The standard gadgets on all ATs' feet are called "Roller Dash". These are wheels located under the sole which allow the machine to literally "power skate" at breakneck speed. This has two advantages: first, it gives the machine incredible speed and agility, a must for ground combat. Second, since the polymer liquid of the muscle cylinders has a limited lifespan, the roller dash make sure the machine does not have to walk as often, an activity that really taxes the armored trooper's systems.

The rollers are powered by an electric motor located inside the wheel. Some ATs have additional wheels and motors, but these are the custom-built, high grade machines such as the Brutishdog. Another version of the roller dash is the "swamp craft", big, flat plates on which are mounted small paddle wheels for propulsion on watery surfaces. The swamp crafts are retracted to the front of the AT's legs when not in use. They are standard equipment on aquatic ATs, except for the Marshydog which has special paddle wheels integrated to the feet.

Next Generation

Technically, the next generation of ATs is the Gustydog, a machine that appears in the new **Armored Trooper VOTOMS** OVA. It seems to be a development of the Bloodsucker that was featured in the **Last Red Shoulder** OVA, and some resemblance with the Strikedog can also be noted. In the **Blue Knight** novels, the machines all have incredible performances, especially the Testa-Rossa, a highly customized Bersega piloted by the main character, Kain McDougall.



BLUE KNIGHT NOVELS

By Martin Ouellette

What we could call the second part of Armored Trooper VOTOMS was a series of novels written by Masanori Hama and published by Sonorama. These are in Japanese and were never translated, but they do add to the VOTOMS saga. The first volume, published in June 1985, recounts the adventures of Kain McDougall, a young Gilgamesh soldier possessing the abilities of the "Quent Mutants", which are also called "Old Types". Since Kain was part of a disbanded unit called "Corpse Army" (the name is self-explanatory), he is now considered a criminal and is wanted by the police. This causes him much problems, one of them being the need to hide under another identity which he does with the help of his girlfriend Roni and another former Corpse Army member called Sha Bakku.

After Sha's death in a battle ring at the hands of a mysterious black AT, Kain swears to avenge him and starts hunting the black AT (named "Shadow Flare") in numerous battle rings. When Kain does meet his nemesis, all his abilities aren't enough and he loses.

In the second book, **Become the Berserker**, Kain is helped by a Gilgamesh spy named

Mima Sencutter, who repairs Kain's Bersega and tells him more about Sha's relation with Kain. It seems that Sha knew of Kain's peculiar abilities and wanted to possess them himself. It soon becomes evident that Clith Katz (the black AT's pilot) also has the special abilities and went further in his "evolution" than Kain, as he pilots the Shadow Flare via a psionic link. When Kain learns of Sha's betrayal, the only thing that keeps him from madness is the love of his girlfriend Roni. At the end of the book, it is Roni's love that helps him defeat Katz and the Shadow Flare.

In **K-Dash**, the third novel (published in May 1986), Kain has been unheard of for two years. During those years, the Merukians have developed the W-1 ("Warrior One") AT as a supersoldier experiment. But lately, they have had problems with a rebel group helped by Kroma Zender, a near legendary Calamity Dog AT pilot. At one moment, as he is fighting a W-1, Zender feels a kinship with the other pilot. Surprised, he leaves the battleground, intent on learning the reasons of this disturbing experience.

In his wandering, Zender meets Roni, now a battle ring bookie. At last, Zender becomes Kain McDougall again. But soon, the Merukian army learns of the presence of the outlaw and both Kain and Roni are arrested. In prison, Kain learns the truth behind Mima's mission: he was to get a blood sample from Kain so that the Merukians could use Kain's special abilities by implanting them in bio-organic computers (clones) and have them pilot the W-1 ATs. After learning the name of the man responsible for the experiment, Kain tries to escape and Roni is killed. Enraged, Kain levels the base and sets out to find the man behind all his troubles: Lorinser.

Volume four, **Screaming Knight** (published in July 1987), brings us to the end of the Blue Knight saga as Kain, piloting the ATM-FX "Infinity"/SSS-X "Testa-Rossa" super-advanced Bersega AT fights the ultimate warrior of the Merukian Knight project, K-DASH and his legendary AT "Rectioneter". Rectioneter itself seems to be the real brain behind the project as it was it which directed Lorinser in his search for the ultimate pilot. Now, Kain must fight this killing machine not only for himself, but for the future of the entire Astragius galaxy...

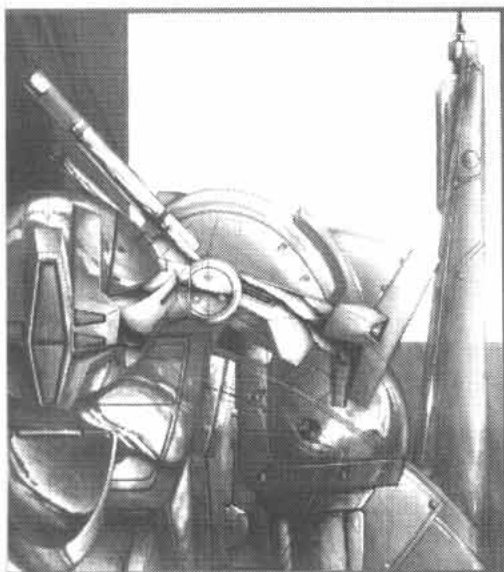
THE MACHINES OF BLUE KNIGHT

By Martin Ouellette

The machines introduced in the first two books of the **Blue Knight** novels are pretty much standard fare, being only customized versions of the Bersega and Scopedog ATs. The only really special machine is Katz's Shadow Flare, which is equipped with a psionic control system, but even then it is obvious that the Shadow Flare is heavily based on the Strikedog.

The machines in parts three and four are out of the ordinary, though. Part three introduces the Wheeldog police AT and multiple "battle ring" customized versions of earlier machines. It also introduces ATM-FX-1 Zerberus VR-Maxima "Calamity Dog", a very advanced version of the Ravidlydog seen in the TV series. Another new design is the tough and independent Warrior-1 unit developed by the Merukian army for the Merukian Knight project, who are controlled by bio-computers replicating Kain's "Old Type" abilities.

Volume four introduces the most advanced machines of all in the VOTOMS universe, with the Rectioneter and the Testa-Rossa Armored Troopers. The Rectioneter seems to have been created by the Wiseman computer seen at the end of the TV series as a back-up plan to find Wiseman's successor. In that aspect, the Rectioneter is very ancient and nearly mythical. Kain's machine, the ATM-FX "Infinity"/SSS-X "Testa-Rossa", is extremely different from the Rectioneter as it is the latest advance in AT technology from the planet Quent. It is a highly advanced Bersega variant which was offered to Kain by Mima Sencutter to make up for the betrayal in Volume Two.



VOTOMS

TERMINOLOGY

By Martin Ouellette

ASTRAGIUS GALAXY

The galaxy where all the story of VOTOMS is set, Astragius has been torn up by war for thousands of year, as its two most powerful empires, Gilgamesh and Balalant, have been fighting for its control. At the moment of the story's beginning, its third major war — the longest (nearly a century) and bloodiest — is finished but some of the soldiers and politicians on both sides seem bent on continuing it, even secretly...

ARMORED TROOPERS

Also known as VOTOM's, Vertical One-man Tank for Offense and Maneuvers, these 3 to 5 meters tall humanoid machines are the main ground-based weapons used by both sides of the conflict. They are very simple and easy to build and maintain. The Gilgamesh army has the widest range of types and are responsible for the most important improvement to these machines: the visor assembly (see Visor). The machine's movements are permitted by "muscle cylinders" filled with a polymer liquid and are electrically activated, just like muscles. Despite their boxy looks, A.T.'s are tremendously effective weapons.

PERFECT SOLDIER

Artificial human being created by the Merukian army for war. A Perfect Soldier is a human being in all of its meanings (it is not an android). The only differences are much faster reflexes and intuitive combat ability. They are also incredible A.T. pilots. There are only two Perfect Soldiers known: Proto-1 (Fyana) and Proto-2 (Ypsilon). Chirico Cuvie would be a "natural" perfect soldier.

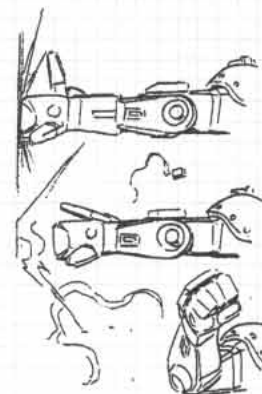
SECRET SOCIETY

Founded by Merukian General Albert Kiri, this organization has only one goal: to take control of the Astragius Galaxy. It is them who stole Proto-1 and the gold on the Rid asteroid. These funds served to create Proto-2. They usually use any means to further their goals and, sadly, Chirico is both the key and a major obstacle to their plan.

A. T. TECHNOLOGY

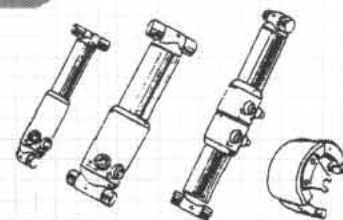
ARMORED PUNCH

The standard close combat weapon of all Gilgamesh/Merukian armored troopers. The way they work is quite simple: an explosive charge in the form of a blank cartridge blasts the fist of a mecha forward on rails. When the fist recoils back, the spent case is ejected and a new cartridge is automatically chambered (number of cartridges is unknown but some A.T.'s have been seen firing them repeatedly without reloading).



MUSCLE CYLINDER

These are, in appearance, identical to standard pneumatic actuators, but in fact are extremely different. They are filled with polymer liquid which acts similarly to myomer muscles (fibers of polymer activated by electrical current). The movement of the cylinders generate electricity, which is charged back into batteries (for sensors and such).



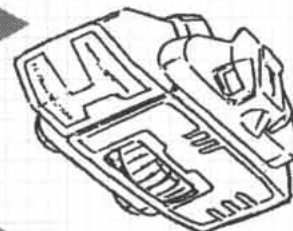
PILE DRIVER

Also known as Pile Gun, it works the same way as the Armored Punch but with a spike driven forward instead of a fist. The Pile Gun is a smaller version mounted on the outer side of the Scopedog class A.T. feet. The spikes point at the ground and, when fired, serves as emergency brakes (or to turn on a dime).



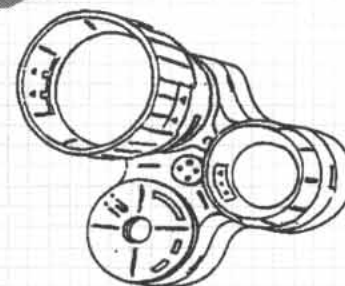
ROLLER DASH

These are wheels installed under the feet of most A.T.'s, allowing them to "powerskate" instead of walking (the more you walk, the sooner you will have to replace your polymer liquid).



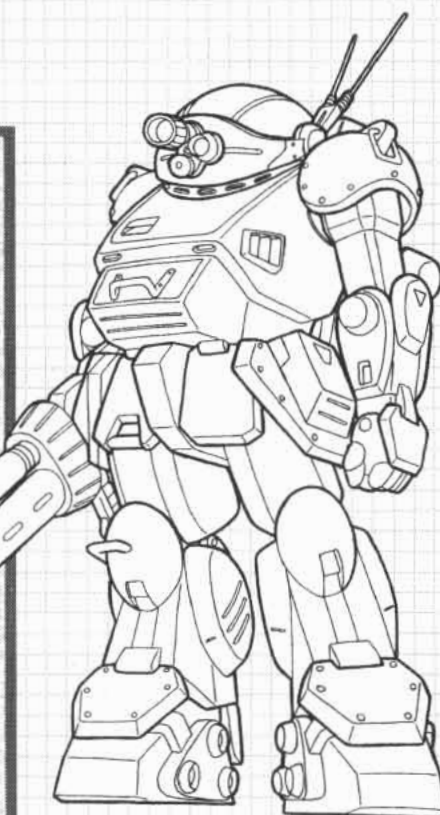
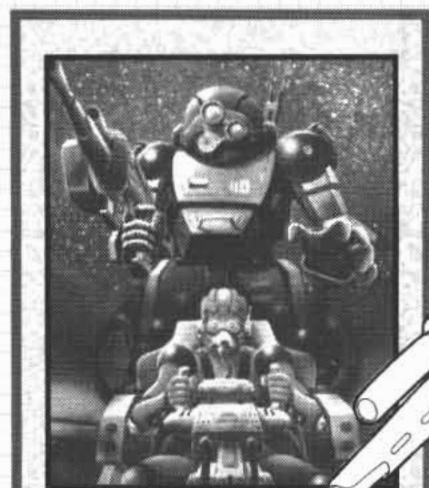
VISOR

The technological improvement that made the A.T.'s the most important weapon on the battlefield. It is composed of three lenses containing all the necessary visual sensors needed for the operation of the machine. Those sensors are linked to the pilot's goggles, giving him the impression that he is the machine, allowing a much faster reaction time. It was developed by the Gilgamesh army for the Scopedog class A.T., but soon became standard on all class of A.T.'s, even on the Balalant side.



ATM-09-ST SCOPEDOG

When someone talks about armored troopers, there's a good chance they are talking about the Scopedog. This machine is the standard armored trooper of the Gilgamesh/Merukian armies, and as such, served as the base for nearly all of the armored trooper designs used by these two armies. The Scopedog is extremely common and can be found in nearly all the junkyards of the Astragius Galaxy. A junkyard usually has enough of them to rebuild a complete, functioning machine in a few hours, the kind of technical exploit at which Chirico Cuvie is considered a master. The Scopedog can be equipped with all kinds of add-ons, such as a "Round Mover" backpack for space action or a parachute pack for combat drops. It can also use dozens of different weapons, but the standard is the 30 mm Gat-22 Rifle Cannon, which is as adaptable as the Scopedog itself. Two of the most outstanding pieces of equipment of the Scopedog design are the "Armored Punch" (a kind of powered punch) and the "Roller Dash" wheels under its feet which permit the machine to literally "power skate" at great speeds.



Code name: Scopedog
Official designation: ATM-09-ST (A.T. Mid-09 Standard)
Use: Standard trooper unit for Gilgamesh/Merukian army
Height: 3804 mm
Dry weight: 6387 kg
Full combat weight: 6627 kg
Armor thickness: 14 mm (front), 6 mm (back)
Maximum speed: 82.6 km/h (dry), 41 km/h (max weight)
Power plant: MCT-128-C (Horse power: 230 Hp)
Liquid polymer capacity: 184 liters
Mean LP life: 218 hours
Armament: (Standard) GAT-22 30 mm Rifle Cannon x1, Armored Punch x2, ammo canister x4

VOTOMS CHARACTERS

by Martin Ouellette

CHIRICO CUVIE

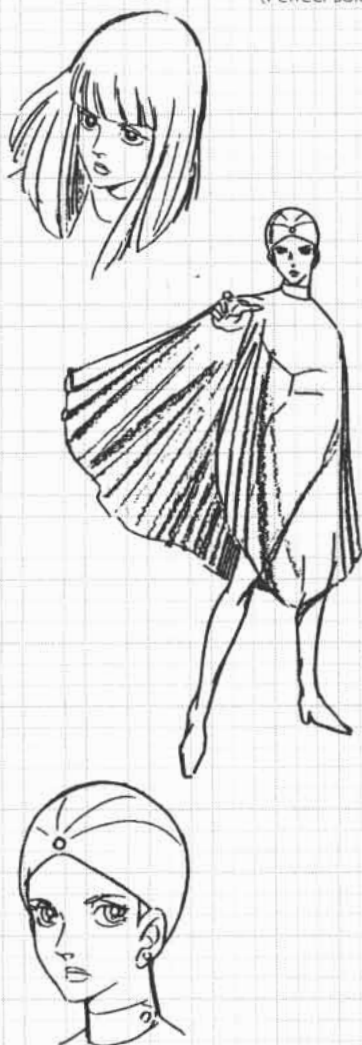
ex-Red Shoulder soldier



An A.T. pilot of the Merukian army, Chirico is the principal character of the **Armored Trooper VOTOMS** saga. Somber and moody, Chirico is a mystery for everyone around him (including the viewer) and since he does not remember anything of his life before his tenth year, he is also one for himself. There is no records of his past and even the Merukian army does not really know who he is. One thing is for sure, though: he is the ultimate survivor, a man who will not accept death, even if the situation is totally desperate. As a Red Shoulder Battalion soldier, Chirico was branded "insubordinate" and never accepted to obey his commanders when the atrocities the Battalion was renowned for were asked of him. This is the reason why he is doing small, unimportant assignments after the disbanding of the infamous battalion. This is when he found himself caught up in operation RID, under the command of Albert Kiri. Chirico does not approve the operation and deserts, setting off the endless pursuit to eliminate him because he knows too much. Chirico's favorite A.T. is the Scopedog, which he likes to customize to high-powered versions.

FYANA, PROTO-1

(Perfect Soldier)

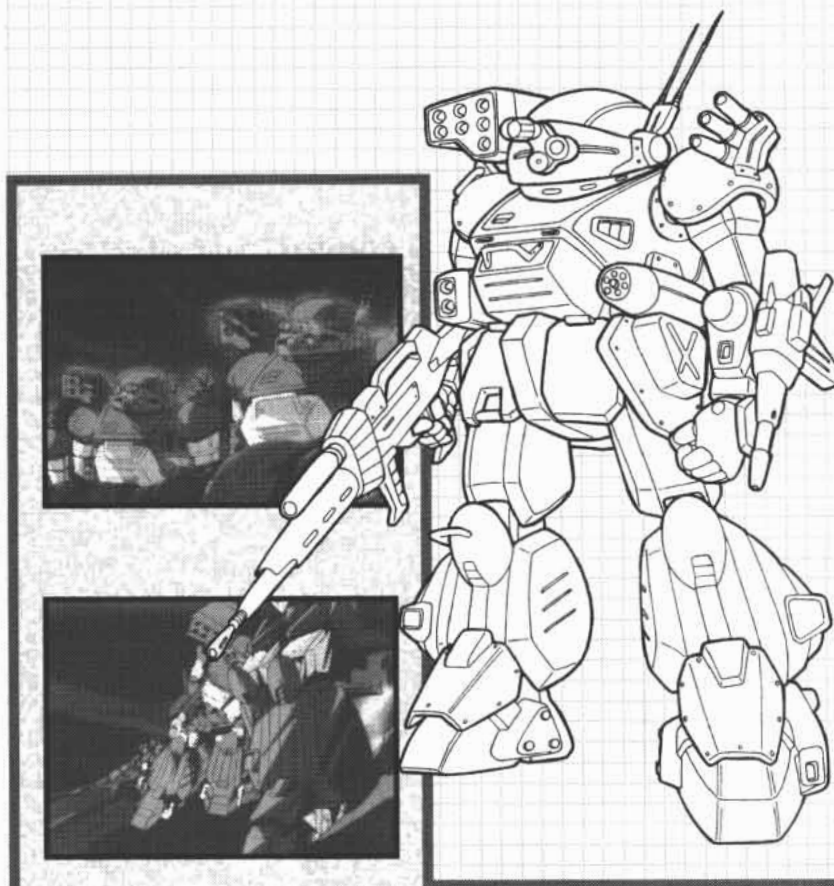


A woman artificially conceived and bio-engineered as a "Perfect Soldier" (contrarily to Chirico, who is a natural Perfect Soldier) by the Merukian army as the ultimate weapon. In a special commando operation organized by Gilgamesh army General Albert Kiri, Fyana (called Proto-1, since she is the first prototype) was taken from the Merukian asteroid of Rid, along with a huge sum of gold which served to create another artificial Perfect Soldier, Ypsilon (called Proto-2). It is during this operation that she "meets" Chirico Cuvie, whose burning eyes are her very first conscious memory. During the course of the TV series and the multiple OVA's, Fyana often has to change sides and unwittingly finds herself engaged in battles. This is because she must follow the side which will provide her with the rare Jijirium mineral whose radiations are vital to her artificial P.S. condition. Fyana and Chirico are very much in love, but the conflicts around them and the greedy people provoking these conflicts keep them from being together.

VOTOMS CHARACTERS

ATM-09-STTC SCOPEDOG TURBO CUSTOM

This machine is the powered-up version of the standard Scopedog. Although its weight has been augmented, it is much faster and maneuverable than the standard machine as well as having more armor. The greatest change from the standard design are the legs, which contain a second Roller Dash wheel and a booster rocket. When not in use, the two are stored inside the leg. The armament is also considerably augmented. The STTC was the standard machine used by the now infamous "Red Shoulder" Battalion, of which Chirico Cuvie was a member until he was discharged. The Turbo Custom is one of the best Votom units in service, and even if its basic Scopedog design is starting to show his age, in the hands of a good pilot, it can go toe to toe with the latest designs, such as the Bloodsucker. Chirico Cuvie often modifies his standard Scopedog to the specs of the Turbo Custom. This machine is called a ATM-00-RSC (Red Shoulder Custom).



Code name: Scopedog Turbo Custom

Official code: ATM-09-STTC (A.T. Mid-09 Standard Turbo Custom)

Use: Standard trooper unit for Red Shoulder Battalion

Height: 4017 mm

Dry weight: 6799 kg

Full combat weight: 7269 kg

Armor thickness: 14 mm (front), 8 mm (back)

Maximum speed: 83 km/h (dry), 52 km/h (max weight)

Power plant: MCT-128-C + MCA-595 (Horse power: 245 Hp)

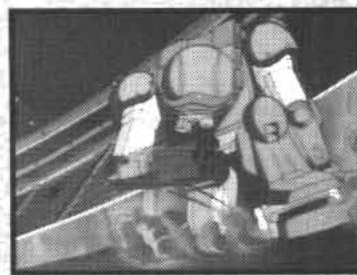
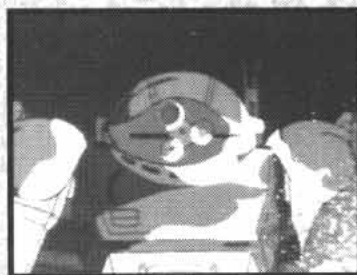
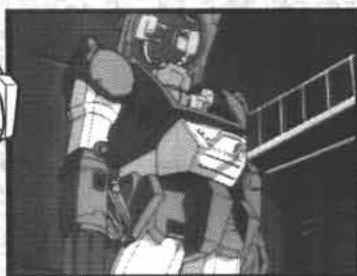
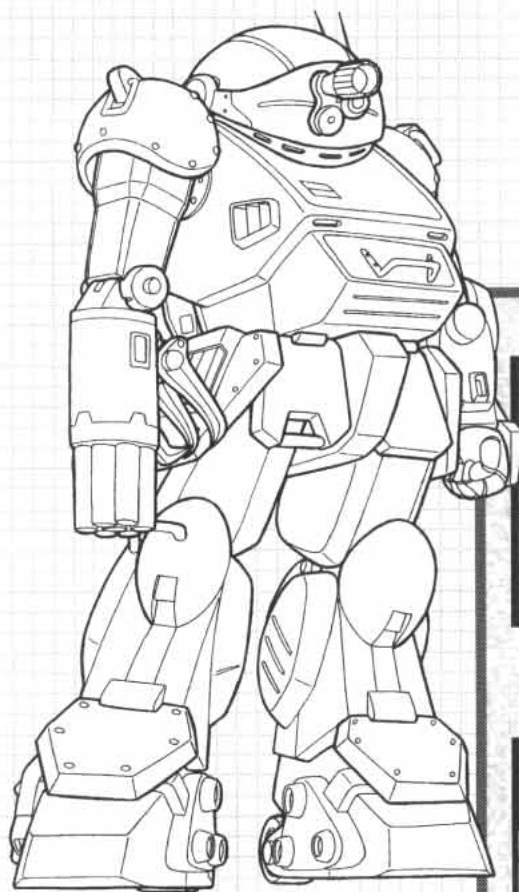
Liquid polymer capacity: 184 liters

Mean LP Life: 164 hours

Armament: (Standard) GAT-22 30 mm Rifle Cannon x1, Armored Punch x 2, machine gun (left forearm) x 2, gatling mini-gun (left side waist) x 1, rocket launcher (big) x1, rocket launcher (small) x1 (right side waist), ammo canister for various weapons x many

ATM-09-GC BRUTISHDOG

The Brutishdog would logically be the heavy fire support for the standard Scopedog, but it is often used as a close quarters combat unit by Fyana. The only significant differences between the standard 'dog and the Brutishdog are the right forearm, which is replaced by a heavy Gatling unit, the weight, the Brutishdog being heavier (though faster) and the power plant, which gives the machine 250 Hp instead of 230. The Brutishdog is Fyana's favorite VOTOM and she uses it extensively. It is usually red and not very common.



Code name: Brutishdog
Official designation: ATM-09 GC (A.T. Mid-09 Gatling Cannon)
Use: Fire support trooper unit for Gilgatheth/Merukian army
Height: 3804 mm
Dry weight: 6729 kg
Full combat weight: 6983 kg
Armor thickness: 14 mm (front), 6 mm (back)
Maximum speed: 85.2 km/h (dry), 52 km/h (max weight)
Power plant: MCT-128-C III (Horse power: 250 Hp)
Liquid polymer capacity: 169 liters
Mean LP life: 147 hours
Armament: Heavy Gatling Cannon (right forearm) x1, claw hand (right forearm) x1, Armored Punch (left forearm) x1

BRUZE GOTHO



A scrap dealer in Uoodo, Gotho is the perfect example of the reluctant good guy who seems to be condemned to do good deeds against his will. A specialist in easy money schemes, Gotho is also a sponsor of the Battle Ring where A.T. pilots fight against each other while the spectators bet on their favorite. And what luck! Chirico is exactly the pilot Gotho needs. At the beginning, Gotho only uses him but he soon becomes his friend and helps Chirico when the going gets tough.

COCONNA



The second woman in Chirico's life (or the first if you hear it from her), Coconna grew up as a street kid in Uoodo, where she learned both toughness and self-reliance. Cute and rather "explosive", it is love at first sight when she meets Chirico. However, to her despair, Chirico does not feel the same. It is his luck that she is there, though, because if it were not for her prodding, Gotho and Vanilla would rather run away than help him. Coconna is one of Chirico's best friends.

VANILLA VARTLA



Another of Chirico's friends of Uoodo, Vanilla's career was, at the beginning, as bookie for the battle ring game. After the destruction of the city, Vanilla flees to Kummen with Gotho and Coconna, where he starts a business as night club owner (with Coconna as singer!). When Kummen is plunged into war, Vanilla even signs up in a mercenary unit. He is one of Chirico's best assets when the going gets tough.

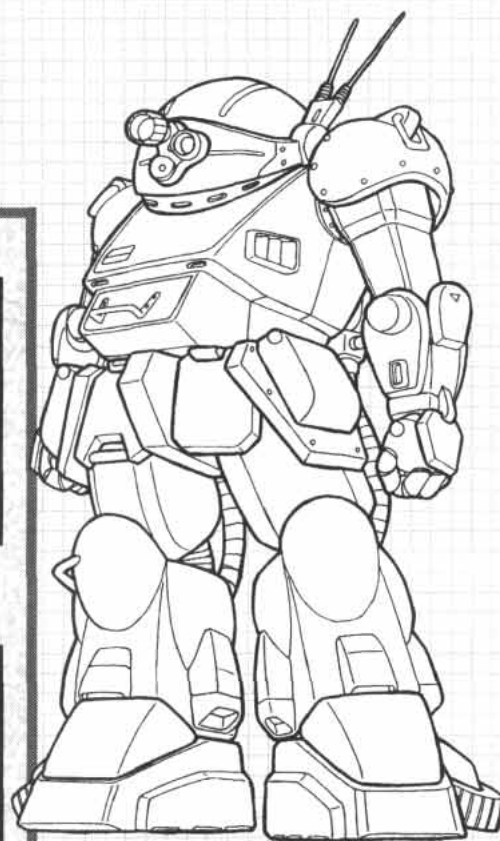
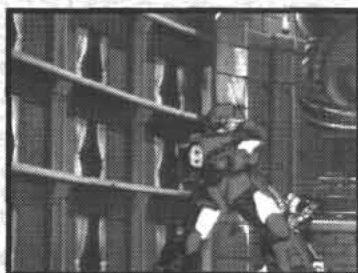
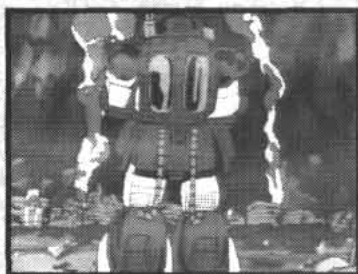
LOU SHAKO



One of the legendary warriors of the Planet Quent, Shako is a calm and collected giant of a man, but also a fierce warrior who does not seem to fear death. Chirico met him on Kummen, where they became friends. When Chirico finds himself on Quent in the latest part of the TV series, Shako reappears and helps him resolve the mysteries of his past. Shako always pilots a Berserga class A.T., a design conceived on Quent.

ATM-09-WR MARSHYDOG

The aquatic version of the Scopedog, the Marshydog is very different from its older brother, although it still looks like the standard 'dog'. In fact, only the higher body remains the same. The lower legs are more blockish and the simple plates on top of the feet are now replaced by bigger ones that cover the entire top. The feet themselves are now equipped with an aquatic version of the Roller Dash wheel. The knee linkage is protected by a cover and the hip plates' Armored Punch magazine compartments are replaced by more voluminous ones containing floating bags. The standard weapon of the Marshydog is the GAT-22-C, a short-barrel version of the GAT-22. Chirico Cuvie uses the Marshydog extensively during the Kummen portion of the TV series.



Code name: Marshydog

Official designation: ATM-09-WR (Armored Trooper Mid-09 Water Resistant)

Use: Aquatic Trooper unit for Gilgamesh/Merukian army
Height: 3731 mm

Dry weight: 6555 kg

Full combat weight: 6795 kg

Armor thickness: 14 mm (front), 4 mm (back)

Maximum speed: 62 km/h (dry), 42 km/h (max weight)

Power plant: MCT-128-C (**Horse power:** 160 Hp)

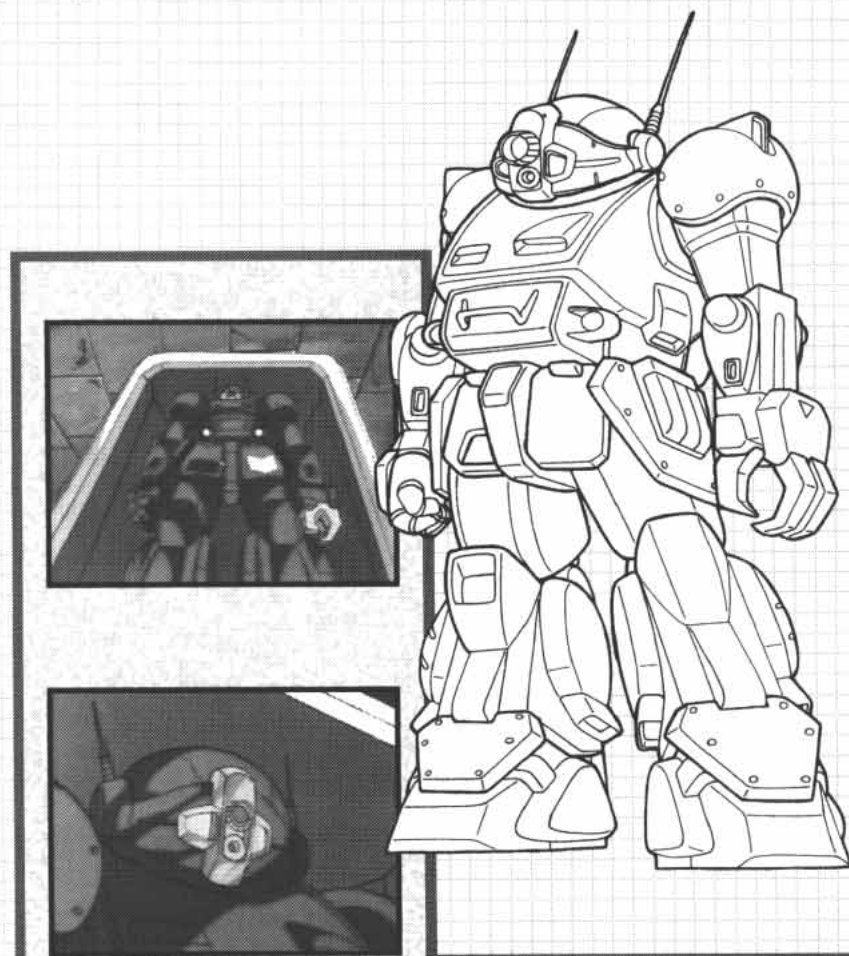
Liquid polymer capacity: 160 liters

Mean LP Life: 192 hours

Armament: GAT-22-C 30 mm Rifle Cannon x1, Armored Punch x2, ammo canisters

X-ATH-02 STRIKEDOG

The machine piloted by Ypsilon during the Kummen and Sunsa portions of the TV series, the Strikedog is a custom-built, heavy armored version of the Scopedog A.T. It has more sensors than the usual machines and is more heavily armed. Its most specific feature is definitely its left forearm, whose hand has been replaced by a big claw unit, inside of which a heavy cannon is dissimulated. The Strikedog also distinguishes itself by its incredible maneuverability and speed, which are mostly the result of its power plant, a MCM-2 MX delivering 410 Hp. There is only one Strikedog and it is painted dark blue. The Strikedog is equipped for space flight.



Code name: Strikedog
Official code: X-ATH-02 (Extra-Armored Trooper Heavy - 02)
Use: Custom built trooper for Proto-2 Perfect Soldier
Height: 4250 mm
Dry weight: 7322 kg
Full combat weight: 7750 kg
Armor thickness: 14 mm (front), 6 mm (back)
Maximum speed: 98 km/h (dry), 60 km/h (max weight)
Power plant: MCM-2MX (Horse power: 410 Hp)
Liquid polymer capacity: 200 liters
Mean LP life: 22 hours
Armament: (Standard) X-SAT-D1 Bazooka x1, forearm cannon x1, Strike Claw x1, Armored Punch x1

YPSILON (PROTO-2)



Chirico Cuvie's nemesis in the Kummen and Sunsa portions of the TV series and the **Last Red Shoulder** O.V.A. He was created by the Secret Society of Albert Kiri using the funds and knowledge stolen on Rid (large sums of gold and the data files on the creation of Proto-1). Ypsilon was bio-engineered by a Secret Society team which included the twin Shumitel brothers, who are learning all they can about P.S. technolog and regard Ypsilon as a masterpiece. Ypsilon is supposed to be the perfect killing machine, but the emotions he acquired at the contact of Fyana made him highly unpredictable. His fighting style borders on the reckless (crazed would be a better description) and he always pilots a custom A.T., the Strikedog being the one most identified with him.

GENERAL ALBERT KIRI



The creator and commander of Operation Rid, where a small group of officers, plotting to control the galaxy, stole a huge quantity of gold along with Proto-1 from a Merukian base. Kiri then formed the Secret Society which has, since then, been on Chirico's back to eliminate him because of his knowledge. Kiri also wants the key to the great secrets of the universe and thinks that Chirico can give it to him. And any methods are good to obtain them!

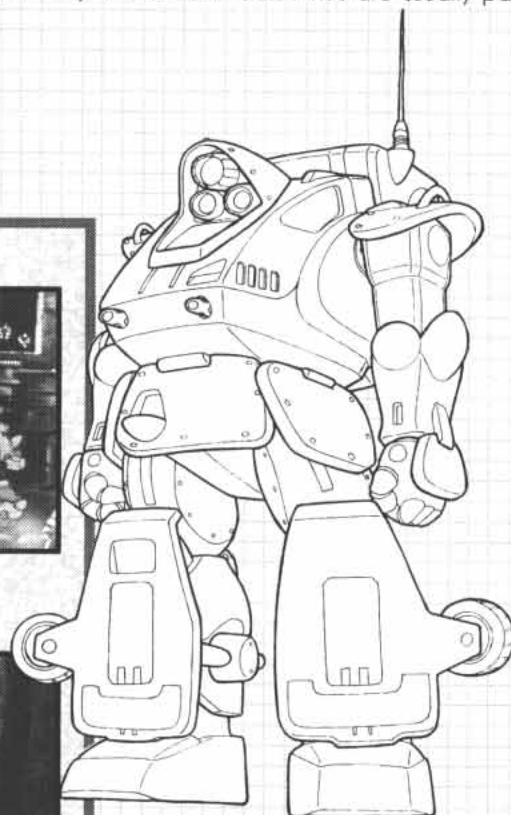
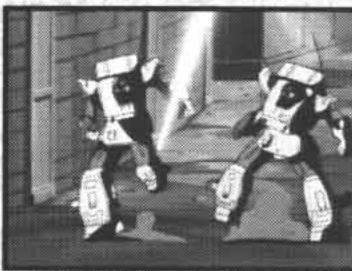
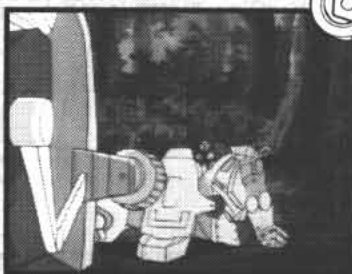
COLONEL YORAN PERUZEN



The mastermind behind the formation of the Red Shoulder Battalion, Peruzen is one of the best soldiers the Merukian army has ever produced. But this talent is usually employed in sinister plots and even more so since the Red Shoulder were disbanded. Peruzen has put his brilliance to the service of the secret society of Albert Kiri and serves as consultant on the Perfect Soldier project. Peruzen is the cause of all of Chirico's problems.

ATH-14-WP STANDING TURTLE

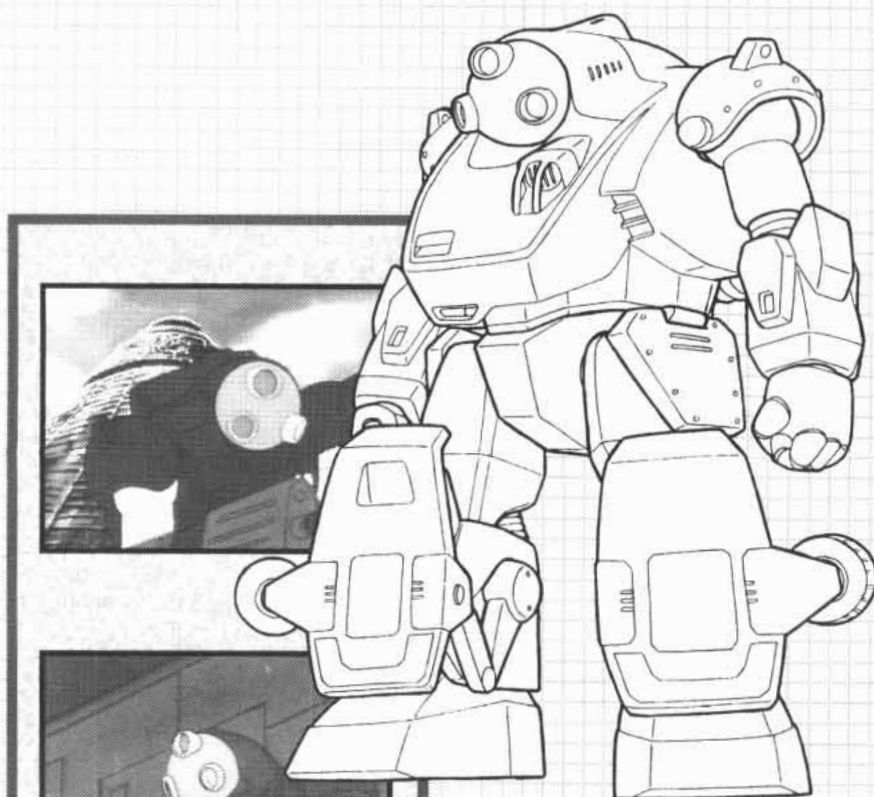
Not long after the ATM-09 Scopedog went into service, it soon became evident that a heavier and more resistant class of A.T. would have to be developed for operations in rough, rugged terrain such as on Kummen. Thus the Tortoise class appeared, not considerably taller but much heavier and stronger, thanks to its thicker armor. Its power plant was also much more powerful, although this did not result in more speed, as the machine was still quite heavy. There is an aquatic version of the Standing Tortoise named Stranding Turtle. The only significant changes are its lower legs, equipped with Swamp Craft which slide under the feet. Ypsilon uses a customized Stranding Turtle (named Snapping Turtle) on Kummen. There is also a space version of the Standing Tortoise (ATH-14-SA). The Tortoise class A.T.'s are usually painted dark Kahki green.



Code name: Standing Turtle
Official designation: AHT-14-WP (A.T. Heavy-14-Water Proof)
Use: Heavy Standard trooper unit for Gilgamesh/Merukian army
Height: 4022 mm
Dry weight: 8033 kg
Full combat weight: 8264 kg
Armor thickness: 15 mm (front), 5 mm (back)
Maximum speed: 51 km/h (dry), 40 km/h (max weight)
Power plant: MCT-211-C (Horse power: 310 Hp)
Liquid polymer capacity: 190 liters
Mean LP Life: 82 hours
Armament: (Standard) HRAT-23 automatic rocket launcher, machine gun x2, Armored Punch x2 (GAT-19 Rifle Cannon and X-SAT-01 Bazooka are also standard weapons)

ATH-06-WP DIVING BEETLE

The machine which inspired the Tortoise class of A.T.'s, the Diving Beetle was designed as an aquatic unit after the tests with the Marshydog showed that a unit specifically built for the job would be a better investment of both time and money. Heavily armored but slow, the Diving Beetle proved itself on terrains such as Kummen, covered with marshes and small rivers. The most distinguishing trait of the Diving Beetle is its face plate, which revolves when the pilot switches sensor cameras. Kuan Yu, Chirico's commanding officer in EX-10 Special Forces, pilots a Diving Beetle during the Kummen episodes of the TV series. The Diving Beetle is usually painted dark blue.



Code Name: Diving Beetle
Official designation: ATH-06-WP (A.T. Heavy-06-Water Proof)
Use: Heavy aquatic trooper unit for Gilgameth/Merukian army
Height: 4148 mm
Dry Weight: 8130 kg
Full combat weight: 8415 kg
Armor thickness: 15 mm (front), 6 mm (back)
Maximum speed: 56 km/h (dry), 47 km/h (Max weight)
Power plant: MCT-228-CF (Horse power: 360 Hp)
Liquid polymer capacity: 190 liters
Mean LP Life: 166 hours
Armament: (Standard) GAT-19 Rifle Cannon x1, Armored Punch x2

ARON & GURAN SHUMITEL



The Shumitel brothers are two of the Secret Society scientists involved in the Perfect Soldier project and co-conspirators under Albert Kiri. They are trying to learn all they can about the Perfect Soldiers, by whatever means possible, and regard Proto-2 (Ypsilon) as a demigod. They are present throughout the series up to the very last few episodes on Quent. Aron dresses in brown clothing, while Guran prefers green.

SELJU BORO



A Gilgameth officer who took part in the organization of Operation Rid. He later disguises himself as a holy man to move freely on Uoodo. Boro is in charge of the education of both Proto-1 and Proto-2. An egotistical and cruel man, he uses people (including both Perfect Soldiers) as mere tools to further his own agenda.

BOONE



The leader of a large motorcycle gang that terrorizes the city with frequent raids for human captives who are then used as slave labor to extract Jijirium, the latter is then sold back to the complacent authorities. Boone is in league with Uodo's police chief to continue his reign of terror — reign that will end with Chirico's arrival.

ORIYA



Boro's bodyguard in Uodo, Oriya, was one of the field commanders of Operation Rid. He is sent after Chirico in Uodo.

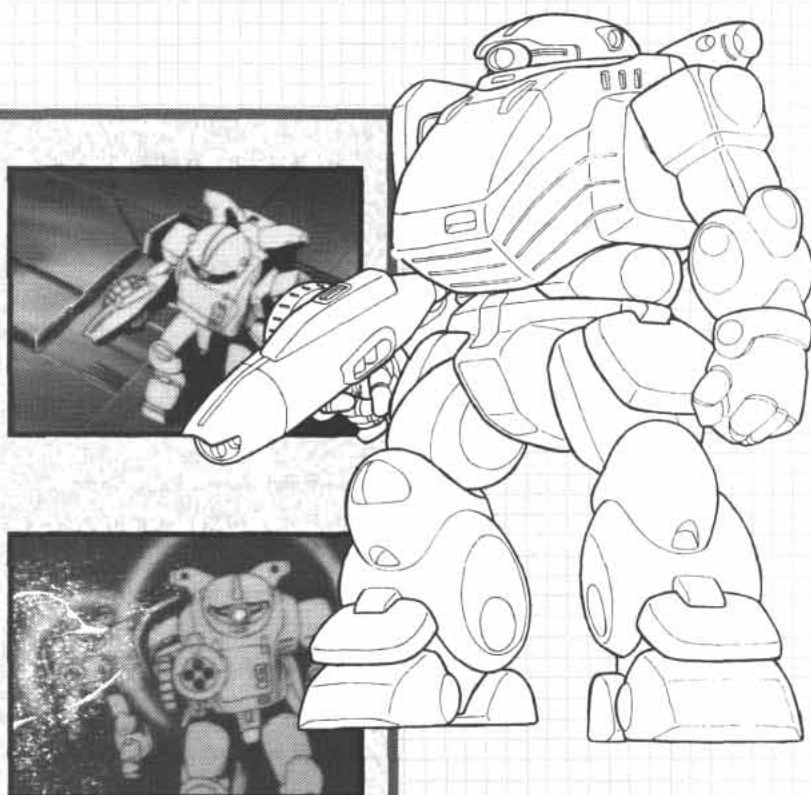
KONIN



Oriya's partner in Operation Rid. He is the one who was ordered to kill Chirico. When Chirico is spotted in Uodo, he goes after him to finish the job.

B-ATM-03 FATTY

The standard trooper A.T. of the Balalant army. Although the Gilgameth/Merukian alliance has developed two lines of A.T.'s composed of a great number of versions, it does not seem that the Balalants needed to develop any other line than the Fatty's. This could be explained by three reasons. First, the Fatty is just between the Scopedog and the Tortoise lines in its dimensions and performances. Second, it is very adaptable and can fight in different environments without modifications. And third, it was satisfactory in all operations so far. The only known development of the Fatty is the B-ATM-03-DT Advanced Fatty Desert Type, a desert type mecha equipped with more powerful Roller Dash wheels and greater firepower. The standard Fatty is equipped for space flight. It is usually painted sky blue with red trim, while the advanced model is painted desert camo. A souped-up version of the Fatty, called Funny Devil, is seen in the Blue Knight novels.



Code Name: Fatty

Official designation: B-ATM-03 (Balalant-A.T. Mid-03)

Use: Standard trooper unit for Balalant army

Height: 4020 mm

Dry Weight: 8089 kg

Full combat weight: 8812 kg (8962 kg for "advanced" version)

Armor thickness: 16 mm (front), 6 mm (back)

Maximum speed: 60 km/h (dry), 32 km/h (max weight)

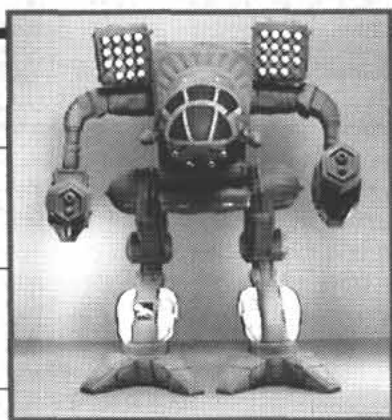
Power plant: GCT-2C (GCT-2D for "advanced" version) (**Horse power:** Unknown)

Liquid polymer capacity: 188 liters

Mean LP life: 98 hours (89 for "advanced" version)

Armament: G-BATM-02 Gatling Cannon or G-BATM-04 Beam Cannon

Armament for Advanced Fatty: G-BATM-02 Gatling Cannon (modified) x1, heavy missile launcher x1 (three missiles), mortar x2, shoulder mounted Pile Driver x1



THUNDERING MADCAT PART II

By the DP9 Modeling Team

In the first part of the Madcat overview, we talked to sculptor John Ferrari about the model and examined the particulars of its construction. In this second installment, we will see how the model was painted and weathered, then discuss ways to build the other weapon configurations as shown in FASA's *Technical Readout 3050*.

P A I N T I N G

Lacquers and enamels give poor results on vinyl, so we selected acrylic colors to paint the Madcat. Gunze-Sanyo flat Red-Brown acrylic paint was airbrushed over a light coat of light gray primer (also water-based), then weathered by spraying at random a slightly lighter shade of the main color using the airbrush. This simulates the paint's fading and decoloration, and the effect must be very subtle.

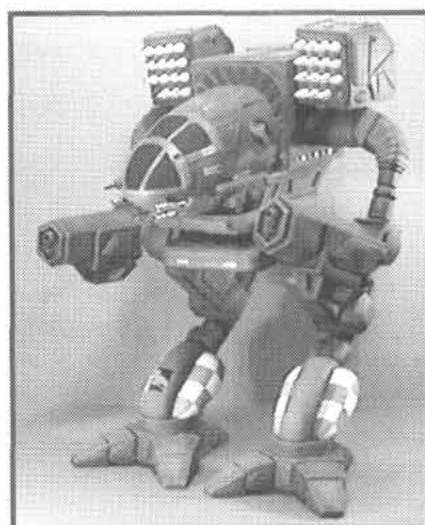
PAINT SCHEME

One great advantage of building science-fiction models is that they are just that: fictionals. There is no research to be made, no exact color to reproduce — the modeler picks the color.

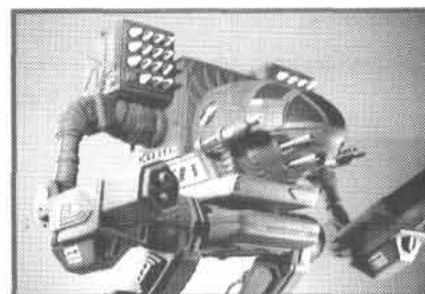
The Madcat model is so big, it begs for a paint scheme that will make it appear bigger. Strong, earthy colors will accomplish just that: greys, browns and sandy yellows. Of course, the model can sport other colors such as army green; any will do as long as it is not overly brilliant (flash purple is out of the question!).

It seems that favorite Madcat paint schemes always include checkerboards on the legs. If the modeler wishes to use them, contrasting colors should be chosen, not only between themselves, but the overall color too. For example, bright green/white on a red-brown overall or yellow/red on a grey overall provides a nice effect.

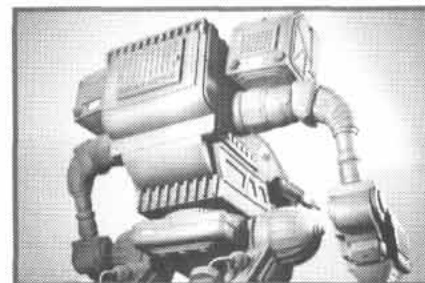
The choice of color can echo the markings of the chosen clan: the green bird of the Jade Falcons is echoed in the green of the leg checkerboards on our model, for example. The blue and white Ghost Bear insignia would be well supported by stripes of the same color.



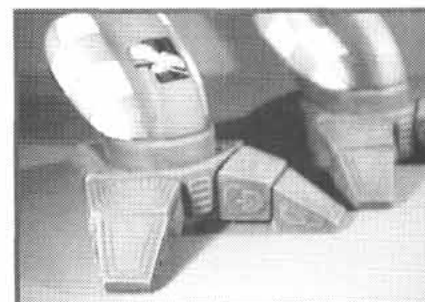
Once assembled, the MadCat is an impressive model standing nearly a foot tall.



This view shows the various markings placed on the body: they form visual points of interest.



The big radiator fins of the dorsal heatsinks stand out better once drybrushed and weathered.

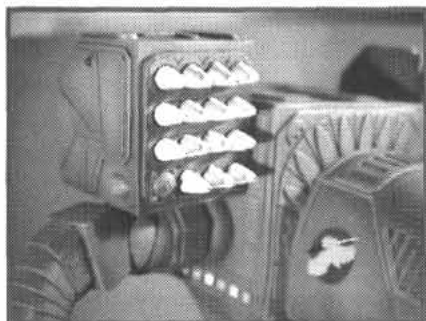


This picture shows the weathering applied to the feet. Note the checkerboard trim on the legs.

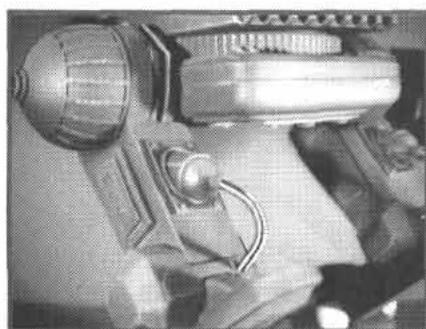
MECHA MODELS



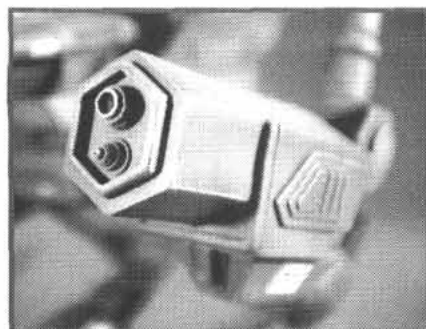
The kit's machineguns were warped so new ones were made out of metal tubing. Note unit insignia on the main body and warning decals on the cockpit.



The missile launchers are prone to warping; this can lead to fit problems later, so fix it early.



The power transfer tubes are springs supplied with the kit. Note the hole drilled in the knee for the tube.



The weapon pod seems heavy once drybrushed, but it is in fact hollow and very light.

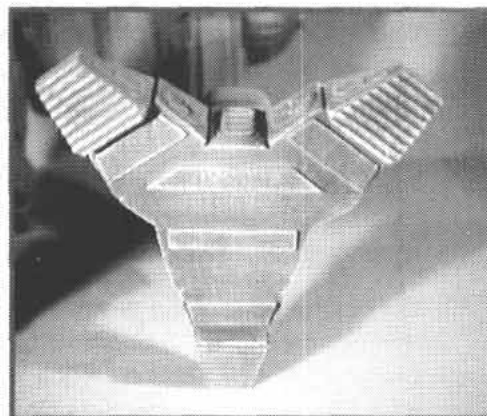
The trim was then painted with more acrylic colors and some masking tape, again with the airbrush. It is possible to use a paintbrush, but one must be careful so that no paint will flow under the edge of the masking tape. If a dark base color is applied, it might be a good idea to first reapply some pale primer (white or light gray) to the trim areas.

Before applying the decals, we sprayed a transparent semi-gloss varnish to protect the base colors and give us a good clean surface. We chose the insignia of Clan Jade Falcon because the green markings contrasted well with the red-brown of the machine. They went on just fine, and responded very well to Microsol decal solvent. Once all decals were applied, we sprayed on a final coat of flat varnish to seal-in the decals and ensure a flat, heavy appearance to the model.

WEATHERING

Now that we have a good base, it is time to apply the weathering. This was done with the airbrush and a fine detail brush. Clan machines are well maintained, so weathering should be discrete and logical.

The first step was to apply silver paint with a small brush to the edges of the feet and other high-friction areas of the 'mech. Be careful and consistent, and don't overdo it! The feet will be slightly scratched, as will the weapon hardpoints. The upper body should have little or no scratches.



A light dusting of sand color was sprayed on with the airbrush on the soles of the feet. Soot was simulated with black and brown pastel powder, mainly around the weapons' barrels. A final coat of clear mat varnish sealed everything in, and the model was complete.

There you have it: a large 1/35 scale model of the most popular Clan Omnimech. It looks quite impressive when placed next to 1/35 scale modern armored vehicles. The kit is simple and easy to build, but because of the fit problems, we recommend that you have a least some modeling experience before tackling this model.

CONVERSIONS

Clan front-line combat machines such as the Madcat have one important characteristic in common: they are built on a modular frame, allowing Clan technicians to customize the weapon payload before each mission to suit the objectives and the mechwarrrior's needs.

MECHA MODELS

FASA Corporation's **Technical Readout 3050** lists five official weapon payloads, called configurations. Interestingly enough, the model's configuration, although rule-complying, is not included in this listing, giving a total of six official configurations for the Madcat Omnimech. The following text proposes ways to modify the basic kit offered by Horizon into any of the other five versions.

MADCAT PRIME

The Madcat Prime is very similar to the configuration proposed in the kit, except perhaps for the LRM-20 launchers on its shoulders. The modeler must now choose to either leave the launchers as they are ("well, five of those tubes fire twice") or extend the launcher housings with styrene sheets. Ten additional warheads would also be needed (plane droptanks or missiles are perfect for this).

The arms do not change at all, nor do the laser housings on either side of the body (one mounts the Medium Pulse Laser, the other a machine gun). Fill the two machine gun mounts on the lower right side of the main body, and reduce the barrel of the upper remaining MG (see Diagram 1) to make it a Small Laser.

MADCAT-A

The A configuration involves a little more work. The LRM launchers and the torso laser housings go directly to the spares box. Fill in the machine gun mounts since the Madcat-A does not carry MGs.

Cut out the front of the arm weapon pods. Fill the holes with a plate of styrene, then glue a length of tubing to make the PPCs' barrels (see Diagram 2). Now, find a suitably boxy 6-shot missile launcher and glue it on the right torso where the LRM launcher normally goes. Finally, make a box with three lasers sticking out the front and glue it opposite the SRM-6 launcher.

MAKING THE MADCAT AN OMNIMECH

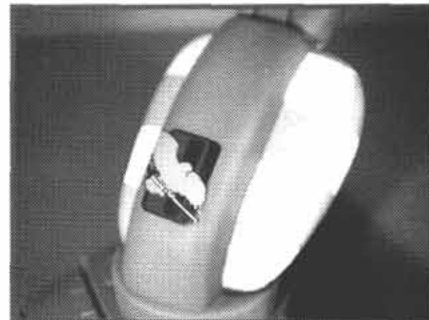
The Madcat design is based on a modular technology. The various pieces of equipment carried can be unbolted and replaced almost at will (see *Conversions*, above). Unfortunately, such a flexibility is not possible with the model. Or is it?

Vinyl has the wonderful property of being slightly soft even at room temperature. It is thus possible to use plastic rods to serve as "plugs" between the weapon packs and the main body (see pictures). By drilling holes in both parts and then inserting a plastic pin of a slightly bigger diameter, one should be able to mount the weapon packs solidly enough. Even the machineguns, if made out of metal tubings, can be inserted that way. As for the arms, it is possible to design mounting collars with a simple pin.

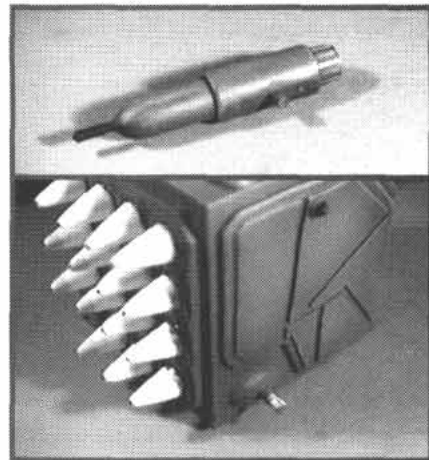
All that's left to do is build the alternate weapon packages, and you now have a true OmniMech in your collection!



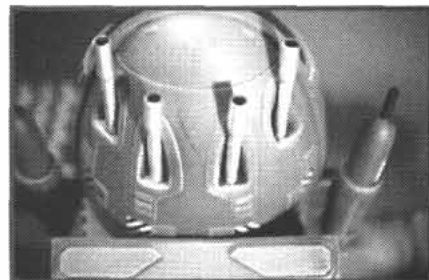
Our model was made so that the weapon pods can be removed. Note the mounting hole in the laser pod support wing.



The Jade Falcon insignia provides a good contrast to the red-brown of the leg.

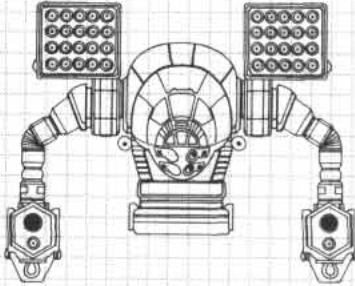


A laser pod and a missile launcher show their mounting pins. These were made out of plastic rod.

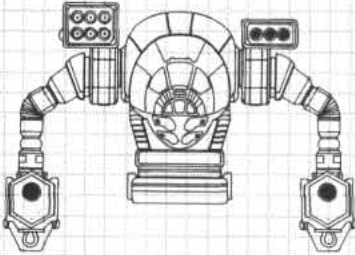


The warning decals of the machineguns can be hard to place. Use a pair of tweezers and some patience.

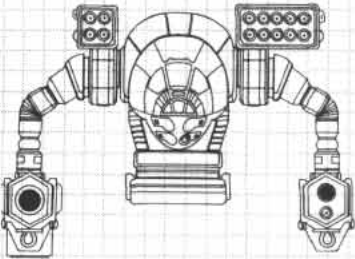
1: Prime Configuration



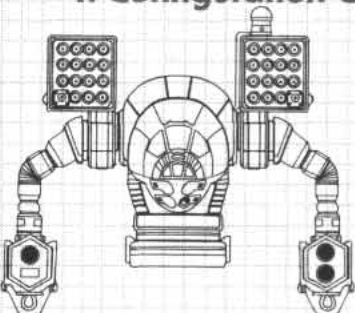
2: Configuration A



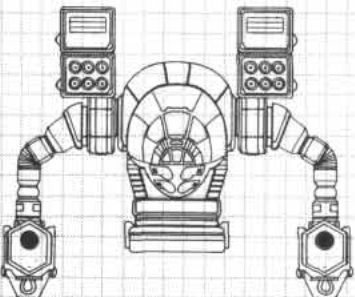
3: Configuration B



4: Configuration C



5: Configuration D



MADCAT-B

The biggest change on this configuration is the adoption of a Gauss Rifle on the right arm. Discard the right arm weapon pod and replace it with a suitably mean cannon. Alternatively, the weapon pod can be used: cut open the front and insert a long piece of tubing, about one inch in diameter and four in length. A slightly larger piece of tubing can be slipped over this to represent the gun's mantle (see Diagram 3).

Fill in all machine gun mounts, except the lower left one. This is where the ER Small Laser goes. Discard the LRM launchers and the torso laser housings. The left LRM launcher should be replaced by a box with ten missiles and one sensor (the Artemis IV system), while the left launcher should have only four missiles in addition to the sensor. These new launchers can either be scratchbuilt versions or the original launchers, modified to fit their new role.

MADCAT-C

A fairly simple conversion, the Madcat-C requires some filling and the addition of a few pieces from the spares box. Discard the torso laser housings: they are not needed. The left weapon pod should have two barrels of equal size, but since both are lasers one could leave the arm as it is. The right arm sports a lone AC/5, so the same procedure as the Madcat-B is applied, except with a thinner weapon barrel (see above).

Fill in all machine gun mounts except the lower left one. Both LRM launchers stay in place, except that the left one sports an Anti-Missile System. The best way to represent it is to use a 1/35 scale Phalanx turret from a plastic armor kit (see Diagram 4).

MADCAT-D

This final version demands a lot of actual structure rebuilding. First, fill in all machine gun mounts and discard the torso laser housings. Next, prepare the arm weapon pods as for configuration A (see above).

Discard the LRM launchers. This version sports four SRM-6 launchers in a forward-backward mounting. Begin by building four separate, identical launchers out of styrene sheers. When done, glue them in place of the LRM launchers as shown in Diagram 5.

CONCLUSION

We hope you liked this overview of the Madcat model, and that it was useful to you. With a little luck, Horizon will decide to make other Omnimechs in the near future. Imagine a battle with the 1/35 scale models!

Also, don't forget that the "Win a Madcat" contest is in full swing (see announcement in Mecha Press #11). Don't miss out on your chance of winning one of these babies, and send in your modeling tricks now!

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SHOWDOWN IN THE BADLANDS

ARMORED TROOPER VOTOMS

by Martin Ouellette

7247, Astragius Galaxy,
in Merukian/Gilgameth space

Episode 1: After the War

An old Merukian army ship approaches the Merukian/Gilgameth strategic base of Rid. As it gets near it launches a landing ship. On board, top notch Merukian Armored Trooper pilots, under the orders of ex-Gilgameth General Albert Kiri, receive their last orders. But one of them seems far away from it all. His name is Chirico Cuvie. As the landing ship gets close to the base, it fires missiles and lands, permitting its complement of A.T.'s to disembark and engage the defenders. The base's soldiers can only offer meager resistance, as the raiders stomp them until none of them is left standing. Chirico protests of the violence done to his own army but this only gets him to be ordered to stand guard while the others go to their objective: a whole shipment of Merukian gold.

As Chirico stands on guard, he is attacked by a survivor of the base forces but is able to destroy his attacker. Through the holes blown into the walls by his attacker, Chirico sees a mysterious oblong object and gets out of his A.T. to study it more carefully. As he gets closer, he can see that there is something alive inside. After some fumbling, he opens two protective doors and sees a beautiful, naked woman staring at him piercingly. He draws a pistol but instead of firing, just flips the switch closing the capsule. Some of his comrades appear and Konin, one of Chirico's field commanders, orders him to get out into space to spot for incoming ships. Chirico obeys, and as he floats into space, he suddenly sees a bomb coming at him! The explosion disables his A.T., jolting him into unconsciousness.

Chirico floats in deep space, until he is picked up, still unconscious, by a Gilgameth army ship. When he wakes up, the Captain's aid, Jean-Paul Rochina, is rather displeased of Chirico's appartenance to the Rid's raiders group and orders Chirico to tell him everything. But even under torture, Chirico won't disclose anything else than his name. After the ship lands on Planet Merukia, Chirico is submitted to another torture session, but still won't budge an inch. As he is dragged in his cell, Chirico escapes the guards and finds his way to a plane, while Rochina sets up a man hunt. However, since nobody can find the escaped soldier, he decides to follow him via the orbital tracking satellites, Chirico's position being revealed by a homing beacon implanted in his shoulder.

Episode 2: Uoodo

Six months have passed and Chirico is still pursued by Rochina's men.

Chirico enters Uoodo, followed by one of the orbital tracking satellites. As he enters the city, the contemplation of such degradation (social and otherwise) stuns him. He has never known anything but the army and is confused about what to think of society, now that he is in it. But before he can make sense of it all, a bunch of bikers erupts into the streets, one of them knocking him down and dumping him into an already nearly full truck of captives. When they arrive at destination, Chirico learns from a man named Rappe that he is now a captive of the Boone Biker Gang and that he was brought to their "base" to work in the Jijirium mine (Jijirium is the crystal indispensable for computer chips). The prisoners are issued heavy cloaks and gas masks. As toxic rain starts to pour on them, the guards force them to continue working.

Later, Chirico observes a police vehicle stop in front of the base and the police chief of Uoodo steps out. Rappe explains to Chirico that for a piece of the profits, the chief lets Boone do whatever he wants in the city. The chief enters Boone's lair, where a party is going on, and announces that he's come to shut down the operation. Boone offers him a bribe but weapon fire cuts off the chief's answer. Chirico and some other prisoners attack the guards. But as he prepares to get on his way, he sees Rappe running into the building and runs after him.

He arrives too late to both save Rappe from death and catches Boone. Chirico has no time to lose, as a bunch of bikers enter the room and start to spray machine gun fire on him. Chirico jumps out a window, the bikers in hot pursuit. Rochina, still monitoring Chirico via satellite, receives a rescue value C order (C refers to an individual who can be rescued only if it can be done without loss) and Chirico is saved from his pursuers "in extremis". He jumps into a waste chute (just to be sure he gets away) and falls into a junkyard, where he finds scrapped Armored Troopers. He climbs in, closes the hatch and falls profoundly asleep.

Episode 3: Encounter

Back in Uoodo's outskirts, Boone is angered by Chirico's disappearance and orders his men to find him. In is A.T.'s cockpit, Chirico is awakened by Bruze Gotho, the owner of the junkyard, who invites him for breakfast. Chirico also meets Coconna, who eyes him appreciatively. As Chirico eats, he sees four scrapped Scopedogs, which Gotho is trying to repair without much success. Chirico gets up and starts to check them out.

Meanwhile, at the police headquarters, Esukai (one of the members of Albert Kiri's secret society) takes the place of the deceased chief and decides to deal with the bikers once and for all. At Gotho's junkyard, Chirico has started to repair one of the Scopedogs and is introduced to one of Gotho's friends, Vanilla Vartla, who asks him questions, but as usual, Chirico stays unresponsive. Not far away from there, Coconna hears a conversation between a couple of bikers and relays the information of their destination to Chirico, who decides to have a talk with Boone. As the police begins a surprise attack, he enters the fray with his Scopedog and starts to wipe the bikers soundly. Boone prepares his last stand and the police start to bombard them. Chirico, haunted by his visions of war, stays frozen.

Episode 4: Battle Ring

Up in orbit, the tracking satellite transmits Rochina a rescue value B (must be saved in priority) and a team of Gilgath/Merukian fire fighters are sent to save Chirico. Gotho arrives soon after and proposes a partnership to Chirico.

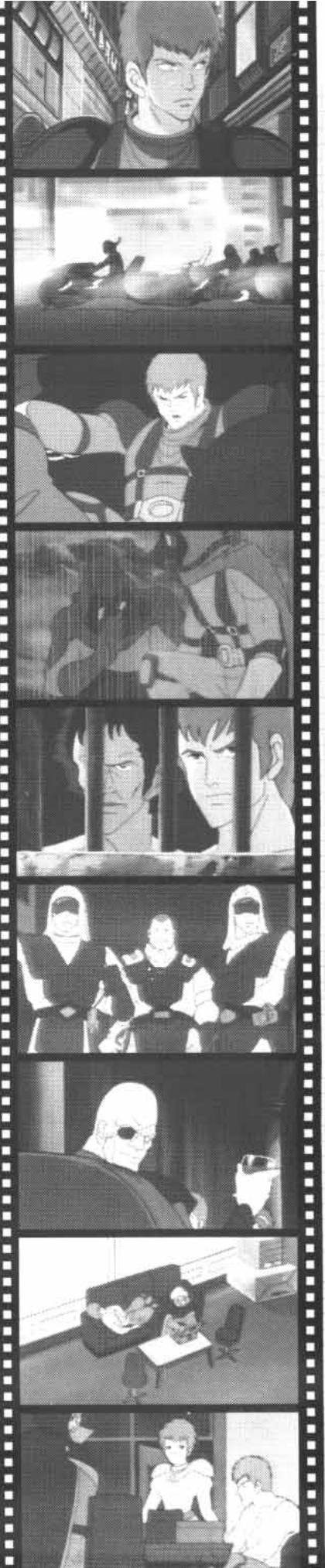
In fact, it is a contract, but Chirico signs nonetheless, even knowing that it commits him to be a battle ring pilot (gladiator combat with A.T.'s).

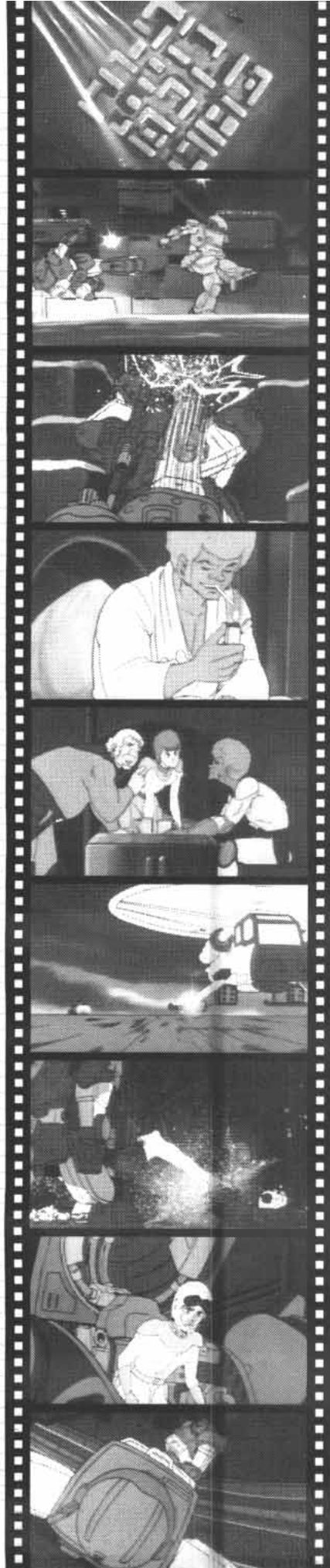
As they arrive to the arena, Chirico sees the woman who was in the capsule on Rid! Gotho tells him that her name is Phantom Lady and that she is looking for a special pilot. In the arena's locker room, Chirico is confronted by a smartalec pilot named Bomo, who insults him. They decide to fight it out in A.T.'s and, as Chirico and Gotho go to check the A.T.'s available, Chirico is spotted by Konin, his field commander on the Rid operation: the man who tried to murder him. Konin calls Esukai and tells him that, this time, he will fulfill his mission. The two A.T.'s step into the ring and the battle begins in earnest. The two pilots are fantastically good but at the end, Chirico crushes his opponent's head with his A.T.'s Armored Punch. In a state of shock, Chirico is hauled in by the police officers sent by Esukai, while Gotho promises to help him.

Episode 5: The Trap

Chirico wakes up to the voice of God, but soon sees that, in fact, it's Boro (another of Albert Kiri's men) who is quite satisfied with himself. Chirico is then beaten and taken to a cell. All this does not really reassure Esukai. Outside the police headquarters, Vanilla checks out the ways to liberate Chirico. He goes to the sleaziest bar in town, where he is met by a policeman on the take, who supplies him with the headquarters' plans. Vanilla first wanted to go at it alone, but Gotho's proposition to supply him with a heavy laser convinces him otherwise. With Coconna in too, the two men make their way through the sewers and then the walls of the headquarters.

They break the floor in front of Chirico's cell just in time to snatch him from the guards who were taking him away to execute him. The entire headquarters are mobilized to find him but to no avail. This does not present a problem for Esukai, whose sources have discovered Chirico's hideout. Esukai calls Chirico at Gotho's place and offers him a deal: he fights Esukai's champion and if he gets out alive, he's free. Chirico accepts (against the others' advices). What Chirico doesn't know is that he'll fight his





other Rid op field commander, a guy named Oriya. But (of course!) Esukai doesn't plan to let Chirico go, and, as Gotho's A.T. transport pulls up, Oriya and his men blow it away with a spread of missiles. Unfortunately for them, Chirico was not in the obliterated A.T. and they get decimated by a proefficient Chirico. When Chirico starts to interrogate Oriya (he definitely wants to know why everybody wants him dead so badly), Esukai orders his men to fire and Oriya is silenced forever. Through the flames, Chirico sees Phantom Lady but she is spirited away before he can reach her.

Episode 6: The Prototype

Chirico returns to reality just fast enough to get out of his A.T. before it blasts up and joins Gotho and the others in their escape via the sewers. Later, at Vanilla's place, Chirico wonders somberly why so many people want to nail him. All the others' asinine propositions are rejected and he quite simply walks out on them, decided to go have a little conversation with Esukai.

After clobbering a cop and taking his uniform, Chirico enters the police headquarters and goes directly to Esukai's office. There, he starts questioning Esukai in a rather forceful way, asking everything about the Rid operation, especially concerning the woman in the capsule. Esukai accepts to take him to the base where she is.

Meanwhile, Gotho and the others, ridding an abandoned monorail, are going exactly to the same place, hoping to find Chirico's files and help him heal the wounds in his psyche. As Chirico arrives at the base, the already-on-alert police force opens fire on him. Chirico rejoins Gotho and the others and, in their precipitation, they end up in Phantom Lady's private quarters. After watching her shower in a strange blue energy, Chirico decides that he wants answers right away and goes after her, but the lady doesn't want to hear a thing and flees. Chirico and the others pursue her but they soon fall on a bunch of cops who open fire on them. While Chirico covers them, Vanilla and the others get their hands on a helicopter and Chirico grapples on it, evading the cops' fire.

Episode 7: The Raid

As police search for them, Chirico and his companions wait at Vanilla's place for things to cool down. Soon, Chirico is bothered by their complaining and decides to go take a walk. This is when he falls on a trashed mannequin whose eyes remind him of the Lady... At the same moment, the lady in question is playing organ in Boro's (another ex-officer involved in Rid) chapel, as he and Esukai talk about the Jijirium shipment destined to Albert Kiri.

In a sushi bar, Chirico hears about the shipment and decides to put a dent in his enemies. Coonna has followed him in his musing, but is stopped by one of Boone's bikers. By the time she escapes, Chirico has disappeared. He goes into a pet shop, buys "something", gets out and looks for a cop. When he finds one, he offers him a bribe and the cop accepts, taking the bag. As he looks inside, the "something" Chirico bought jumps him! Chirico calmly asks him some information about the jijirium shipment and the guy spits it out. At the same moment, Coonna has some problems: the goon we saw before has rounded up some of his comrades and decided that maybe she knows something about the jijirium shipment. Since she heard everything Chirico was told by the cop, in her panic, she tells them all she knows. Gotho and Vanilla are not happy with her, but Chirico proposes they take the shipment themselves during the confusion caused by Boone's attack.

At the Merukian army base, Jean-Paul Rochina receives the order to go to Uoodo to retrieve the "Perfect Soldier" they had lost track of after the Rid raid. As Esukai's men start the shipment transfer, the Boone bikers start their attack. All Chirico and the others have to do is to get to the truck first, not a very difficult mission with Chirico's Scopedog laying down suppressing fire. The only thing Esukai and Boro can do is watch them get away.

Episode 8: The Deal

Once back at Vanilla's place, Gotho, Coonna and Vanilla start to argue about what they'll do with Chirico's jijirium share, as he shows absolutely no interest for it. Chirico walks out on them once more... to go for a walk and think

about his brown-eyed lady. At the police headquarters, Boro lays down a plan that cannot fail.

In his Uodo office, Rochina explains their mission to his two aide and sends them to check for anything they can find on Chirico. As the police start scouring the city, it soon becomes evident that Chirico and his cohorts will not be able to use their treasure. Gotho proposes they trade it against their freedom and some money. Vanilla and Coonna protest, saying that they'll find themselves in prison in a flash if they do so. Gotho decides to go alone and (to his surprise) Esukai and Boro accept the deal. Chirico is sure there is something afoot and makes up a little plan of his own.

At the exchange point, it soon becomes clear that Chirico was right and, as Gotho drives away without the money, Chirico's Scopedog opens fire on the cops who scatter to save their lives. Seeing Esukai, Chirico steps his mecha towards him but the police chief does not need to run, as reinforcements arrive in the form of a red A.T. with a Gatling Gun in place of its right forearm: a Brutishdog. Chirico jumps it but to no avail, the red A.T. blows his A.T. to bits, enabling the cops to capture him, while Gotho and the others, having taken the money from Esukai's truck, make their getaway, unaware of Chirico's situation. As Chirico lays on the ground, the red A.T.'s cockpit opens to let the pilot out, and Chirico sees her brown eyes...

Episode 9: The Rescue

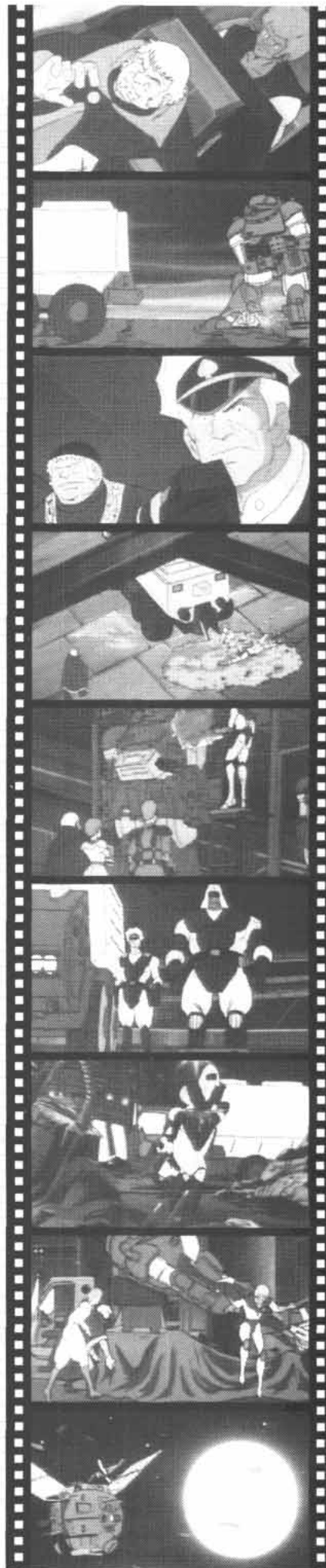
Near the place where Chirico was captured, one of Rochina's aides informs his boss of what just occurred. Chirico finds himself in the middle truck of a caravan going to the police headquarters. Looking at the time, it becomes evident to Gotho and the others that something must have happened to Chirico. At the same moment, a police helicopter lands in front of their hiding place to check it out. Gotho and Vanilla jump the two cops and a message heard on the helicopter's radio informs them where to find Chirico. Coonna wants to save him, but Gotho and Vanilla are not sure about this. After some moral manipulation by Coonna, they decide to help her get "her" Chirico back.

They steal a truck and crash it on the caravan's lead truck, hoping this will make enough of a distraction for him to escape. But it proves not to be enough and Coonna proposes another plan: to dump the entire load of money into the streets, causing a major circulation problem. Vanilla and Gotho make a face but acquiesce to her plan, knowing that this is their only hope of saving Chirico. As they dump a huge amount of gold, in the streets, people jam the caravan, giving enough time to Vanilla to land the chopper and liberate Chirico.

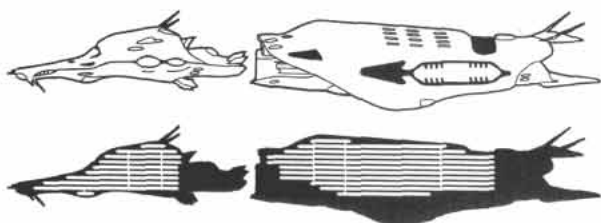
Episode 10: Red Shoulder

In Uodo, Esukai has decided to employ the final solution, as Earth movers and police vehicles start to destroy the part of Uodo where Chirico is believed to be hiding. Luckily for Gotho and his friends, Chirico is there with his no-nonsense military reflexes, as he leads them out of their predicament to a timely escape. Once they have found another place to hide, Chirico announces that his next move is too dangerous for them and that he does not expect them to follow him anymore. They can only stare in shock as he walks out on them (again!).

Back at the police headquarters, Esukai is rather happy with the news that the demolition team has found no sign of life in the rubbles. Boro is also satisfied but Phantom Lady does not seem as happy as they are. Esukai proposes to dispose of her, but Boro overrules him. At the same time, Chirico introduces himself in the battle ring A.T. hangar and starts to assemble a souped-up Scopedog. He is soon joined by Gotho, Vanilla and Coonna (who followed him despite his advice) who help him load up the mecha with weaponry. As a last touch, Vanilla spray paints the mecha's left shoulder pad red, telling Chirico that he is now a Red Shoulder. Chirico's answer freezes Gotho's blood: "Yeah, but you painted the wrong shoulder." Gotho looks at Chirico in disbelief, asking him if he really is a member of Red Shoulder. As Chirico explains his involvement with the Red Shoulder, the police, alerted by the battle ring guards, arrive and start attacking.



• SIDE VIEW/CUTAWAY



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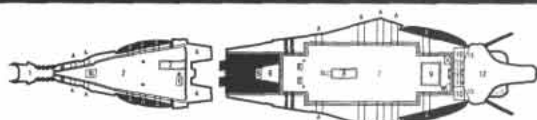
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Available at hobby shops and comic book stores everywhere!

NAME: LM312V04 Victory Gundam

SCALE: 1/144

MATERIAL: Injected plastic w/polyethylene articulations



The first kit in the series is the Victory Gundam itself. Apart from the front armor skirts, which are entirely blue, the kit is molded in the correct color. By using the eye decals, one can get a nice looking replica without even handling glue and paint.

Because of its small size, the model is not transformable. The kit includes a stand, two beam sabers and a beam shield. The rear thrusters are molded with the backpack, which makes them difficult to paint properly.

The only real complaint about this kit is the material of the antennae. They are molded in a soft yellow plastic which is hard to sand properly, making the cleaning of this piece a real chore.

NAME: LM111E02 Gun EZ

SCALE: 1/144

MATERIAL: Injected plastic w/polyethylene articulations



The Gun EZ is molded in medium green plastic, which is a bit darker than the correct light green of the suit's paint scheme. The kit includes the usual options: a clear stand, two beam sabers (one straight, one curved), a beam shield and a superb bazooka.

The molding of the model is flawless and even the head-mounted cannons are hollow. Mobility is surprisingly good for a model of this size, and the various armor plates are very flexible.

Painting is fairly easy, since the suit sports an overall green scheme. The thrusters are molded separately, which facilitate painting greatly. The Gun EZ is definitely a must-have, and is suitable for the beginning modeler.

NAME: RGM-119 James Gun

SCALE: 1/144

MATERIAL: Injected plastic w/polyethylene articulations



The James Gun is the newest GM (General Model) of the Federation in the Victory Gundam timeline. It is space-capable, but we see it mostly in the ground forces.

The model is molded in a crisp light grey plastic; a few parts, mostly the backpack, are molded in dark grey plastic. The kit contains the usual accessories, such as beam sabers, beam shield, bazooka and stand. The casting on our sample was flawless, with delicate detail like the head guns coming out perfectly.

The feet are shaped strangely, and it is unclear whether the empty space is a design flaw or an intentional feature. Whatever it is, it can be easily changed with some plastic sheet and putty.

VICTORY GUNDAM MODELS

By the DP9 Modeling Team

Although the series had a slow start, mainly due to bad press, *Victory Gundam* emerged as a winner. The complex story, set 30 years after the ill-fated *Gundam F-91* movie, counted 51 episodes when it ended a few months ago.

Bandai released almost all the mobile suits and vehicles from *Victory*, either as models or sturdy die-cast toys. This review focuses on the 1/144 scale plastic kits.

OVERVIEW

All *Victory Gundam* models share a similar box with a nice painted illustration on the cover, very alike to the format used for the *F-91* models. Only the Abigor mobile armor had a bigger box, since it is much larger than the other models (see individual reviews).

Because of the storyline, which introduced technological advances, the mobile suits have shrunk in size. Although the models are billed as 1/144 scale, they are about the same size as the old 1/220 kits: the average model stands about 11cm/4.5 inch tall, feet to top of the head. However, there has been no loss of quality at all — the molding is just as good (and sometimes better) than the one on bigger models.

The kits use Bandai's patented System Injection™ process to provide multi-colored parts on the same runner. Because of this, the models can

be assembled without paint and still look somewhat good. Also included in the box are a transparent stand, a sticker sheet (including great "eye" stickers for those who prefer not to paint their model) and a color back-drop card to mount on the stand. The stand has two poles and ends with an articulated ball that allows the model to be placed in a variety of flying postures.

All models use the same V-Frame™ system, a set of rubber articulations which let the modeler snapfit the model very rapidly. It also makes the suits very flexible and capable of many interesting poses. Unfortunately, the rubber doesn't take paint well (in fact, not at all), which means that a properly finished model will still look a bit like a toy. The alternatives are to cover the rubber with thin plastic or mold resin replacement parts, which is not within everyone's capacity. The rubber also makes the model prone to self-desassembly when handled, although it's a simple matter of resnapping the parts together.

CONCLUSION

The simplicity and beauty of these kits makes them perfect choices either as an introduction to modeling for young kids (see *The Basics of Mecha Modeling* elsewhere in this issue) or as miniatures for gaming. Indeed, the size of the suits and the fact that they have build-in stands allow them to be used in any game, including **Mecha!**, **Mekton** (3D rules were published in *Mecha Press* #3) and the upcoming **Silhouette™** Game System from Dream Pod 9. Also, since they use the same basic frame, it is possible to make customized models for personalized games.

Of course, there are many more models available than the six we reviewed. As new kits make their way to our workshop, additional reviews will be published.

NAME: ZM-S09G Tomliatto

SCALE: 1/144

MATERIAL: Injected plastic w/polyethylene articulations

The main Zanscar "grunt" mobile suit in the ground forces, the Tomliatto is a variable suit which can turn into an helicopter. However, the model does not have this feature as it would have been too complex.

The kit is molded in purple plastic. The quality of the molding varies: the head is exceptionally detailed and crisp, while the legs and arms are quite average. The model includes a beam shield, beam sabers and a beam tomahawk in its arsenal.

The Tomliatto has less mobility than other V-Gundam models because of its design. The arms are rather stiff, and the feet have minimal lateral clearance. It is still possible, however, to give the model a nice posture.



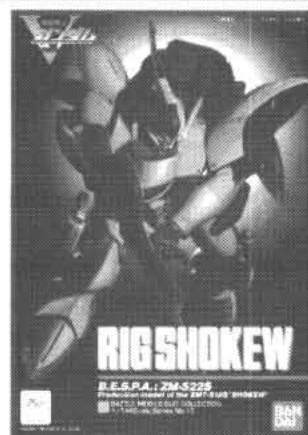
NAME: ZM-S22S Rig Shokew

SCALE: 1/144

MATERIAL: Injected plastic w/polyethylene articulations

The Rig Shokew is the mass-produced version of the Shokew prototype Chronixle piloted (and Usso stole) in the first few episodes. Like its forbear, the Rig Shokew has large feet and a strange insect-like head.

The kit is laden with extras. Apart from the usual beam sabers, beam shield and stand, the suit can carry what look like beam cutters (2) and beam pistols (2 also). Mobility is about average, again because of the design itself. Molding is good, but the lack of thruster detail on the backpack is disappointing. It can easily be corrected by using parts from the spare box, though.



NAME: ZM-D11S Abigor

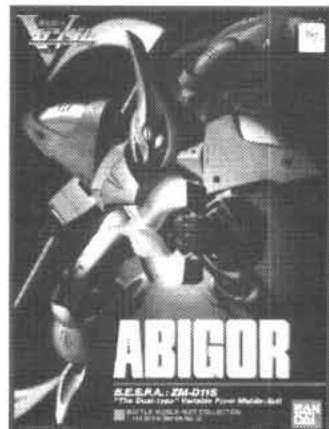
SCALE: 1/144

MATERIAL: Injected plastic w/polyethylene articulations

One of the biggest models in the V-Gundam line, the Abigor is a large variable mobile armor used by the Zanscar Empire. The kit is not transformable, but includes optional parts to convert the model from mobile suit mode to mobile armor mode. Since the model is quite big, it does not use the V-Frame™.

Compared to other V Gundam kits, this model is huge (about the same size as a "standard" Gundam model) but a bit lacking in quality. There are no clear parts, although the pieces are molded in two shades of green. The fit is average on all parts.

Mobility is quite good, though it would be preferable to increase the clearance of the feet.



THE BASICS OF MECHA MODELING

By the DP9 Modeling Team

The Basics of Mecha Modeling is a brand new on-going series about—what else—mecha modeling. It is primarily intended for beginner-level modelers, but it is the authors' hope that even long-time plastic bashers will find something useful in these pages.

The series is a direct result of the queries many of the readers addressed to us since the magazine exists. Many wanted to get into mecha modeling, but had no idea on how to do it. The Pod team thus sat down and laid down on paper the observations of several combined years of modeling experience. We sincerely hope it will help make the discovery of this hobby easier for many readers.

INTRODUCTION

Each article in the series will focus on one particular aspect of mecha building, starting with the basics: choosing a kit, buying tools, and so on. As the modeler progresses and gains new abilities, so will the articles change and present more advanced techniques and ideas to create astounding pieces of art.

The first article, starting just below, gives the reader a few pointers on which kits to pick when starting. The beginner will want to stay away from complex (and costly) models at first, and this article is just right to help out.

It also includes suggestions of easy to find, easy to build kits.

The second article will list the various tools needed to build plastic models, starting with the very basic necessities and then listing more fancy tools for special effects.

The third article will focus on paint, the dreaded liquid that transforms a dull plastic toy into a powerful, if small, warmachine. It examines the different types of paint available on the market as well as paintbrushes—how to choose them and how to take care of them.

Many beginners are lost when they open the box of their first kit and start building, and article number four will shed some light on this operation. Cleaning the parts, dry-fitting them, and general preparation will all be examined in detail. A careful preparation will save many hours of unnecessary work later.

Liquid, tube, cyanocrylate, epoxy glues: which one to choose, and for which application? Article five is a continuation of the fourth, and focuses on glues, their differences and their uses.

Once these basic principles are understood, subsequent articles will introduce more advanced methods, such as detailing, kit-bashing and airbrushing. Weathering will also be examined. However, for now, one must start at the beginning: choosing a first kit.



PART 1

CHOOSING YOUR FIRST KIT

So you have decided to launch yourself into mecha modeling. Arriving at your favorite hobby or anime store (or glancing through a mail-order catalog), you find yourself staring at an enormous selection of kits from series as diverse as Gundam, Five Star Stories, Macross and many others. You must now decide which kit to buy, but ask yourself a few questions before: do I have some modeling experience? Did I ever build a mecha model before? How good am I (be honest and critical here)? It is assumed that you have sufficient funds to purchase almost any ordinary model—around \$50 US.



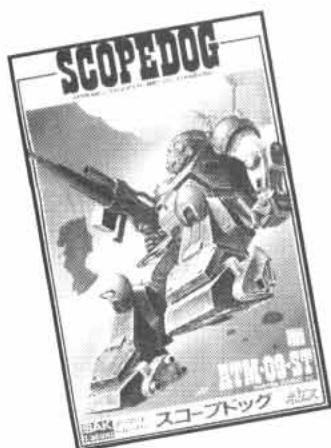
You've never built a model before:

Although there are beautiful snap-fit kits out there (such as the V Gundam models; see reviews elsewhere in this issue), we recommend an old-fashioned, must-be-glued model. Such a kit will teach you how to use glue and are generally less expensive than an equivalent-sized snap-fit model.

The best beginner kit we know of, bar none, is the RGM-89 Jegan from the movie Char's Counterattack (1/144 scale plastic model from Bandai). It usually costs around 8 to 10 dollars, is rugged and has a simple but pleasing paint scheme (overall light green). The AGX-04 Gerbera Tetra and GP-03S Gundam from MS Gundam 0083 (both 1/144 plastic kits by Bandai) are also a good choice, but are a little more expensive (16 to 20 dollars).



You have some modeling experience, but never built a mecha model:



You are now more or less familiar with the basic modeling techniques, so a more challenging kit can be selected. Something like a Scopedog from Armored Trooper VOTOMS (1/35 scale plastic kit by Takara) is perfect for armor modelers, while a Macross Valkyrie (the non-transformable models made by both Aii and Bandai) should please warplane

buffs. These are still easy but more complex than an absolute beginner kit.

One very important thing to remember: on a mecha model, unlike a plane, tank or car, everything moves! Be extra-careful when planning, building and painting so as not to glue something that shouldn't be glued.



You have built several mecha models before:

At this point, it's a good bet that you know what you are doing. You are used to find kits that suit you. Still, be careful around transformable models: they are hell to paint! This is mostly because you will often see parts in one mode that you don't see in another. Also, the transformation is likely to scratch the paint, so a good varnish is a must!

Good transformable kits include the 1/72 scale plastic Valkyrie made by Bandai and Aii (also imported by Revell under the "Robotech" label), which is big enough to do a good job and will surely be a hit with fighter plane fans. If you want to go for something really challenging, try the transformable Mospeada kits (by Imai; also imported by Monogram under the "Gobots" label). Both the 1/48 scale Legioss fighter and the 1/12 scale Ride Armor have lots of small parts and will test your skill with the paintbrush.



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A NOTE ON GARAGE KITS

It is possible that you don't like working with plastic or want to try something else, and you have a lot of money at your disposal. Then, you might want to go for a garage kit (so named because of their small production run, often produced in private homes). Garage kits are generally expensive and for that reason make bad first models.

Resin has the advantages of being cast in soft molds, allowing more complex parts to be made. Resin also "holds" detail really well, and so most resin kits (but not all, unfortunately) are extensively detailed and engraved. The really experienced modeler might want to check out a Five Star Stories kit: sure they are expensive, but what beauties!

Soft vinyl is mostly used for large scale models, especially models of characters and movie monsters. Soft vinyl cannot hold as much detail as resin, but is lighter and widely used nonetheless. Vinyl kits are also sim-

ple to build (trim excess, heat slightly, assemble, paint).

For the modeler of some experience, a resin kit could be a nice change of pace. Something like a 1/144 scale resin Gundam kit (by B-Club) is a good choice; in fact, any simple, non-articulated kit will do. Just remember that resin kits are not built quite the same way as plastic kits (a future article will cover resin kits). Soft vinyl kits also have their own quirks, and can be hard to build properly (again, a future article will explain it all). Bandai, Kaiyodo and other companies like Max Factory offer a large variety of vinyl kits, many of which are easy to find and not too expensive. North American companies like Horizon also offer nice vinyl models (check out the Madcat article).

When building both types of garage kits, refer extensively to the instructions: sure, they are in Japanese, but they often feature lots of diagrams.

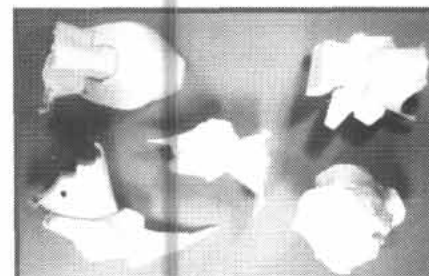
Conclusion

As you can see, there is something available on the market for everybody, from the absolute beginner to the experienced modeler. One last note: just be careful what you choose for your first kit, either for you or somebody else. Many well-meaning parents or big brother/sister give complex kits to young children who are simply not ready. This is definitely not a good idea: the poor kid will get discouraged very fast and regret the purchase of the model. For such occasion, go for a simple snap-fit kit such as the new V Gundam models, which are far easier to assemble and often do not require glue or paint. They cost a little more, but are more likely to survive their young owner's heavy-handed techniques.

Next time, we will examine the tools of the trade. Stay tuned!



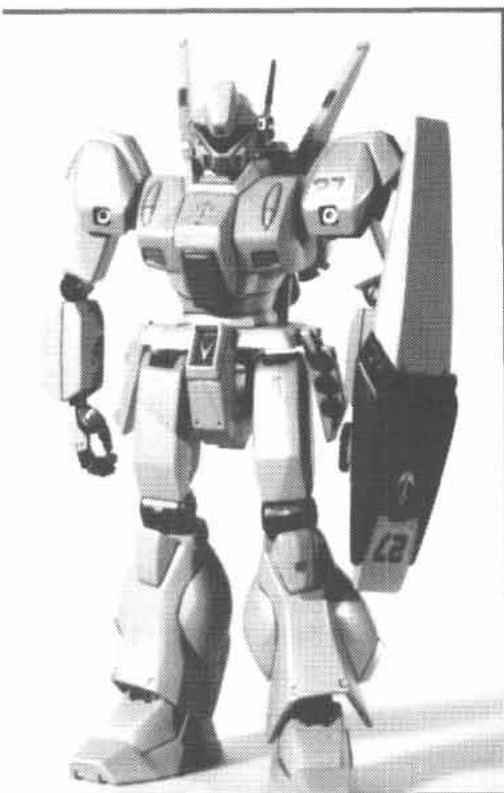
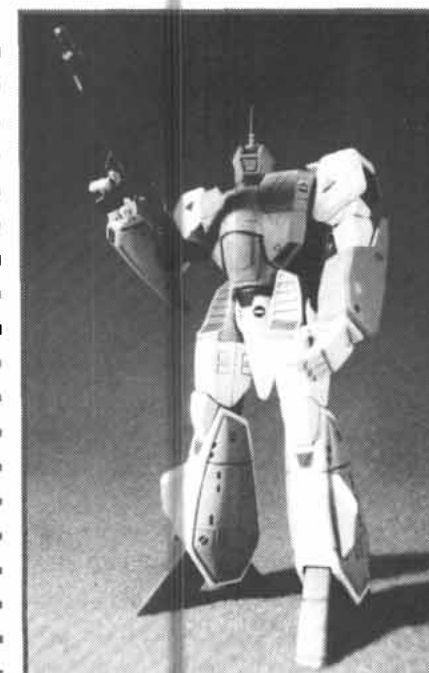
A typical selection of resin and vinyl kits.

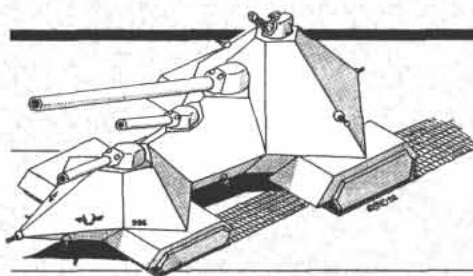


How vinyl parts appear straight from the box.



Working vinyl is somewhat peculiar, requiring hot water and a very sharp knife.





OHMU WAR MACHINE

By Marc A. Vézina

The popularity of the walking vehicle as a tool of war is definitely rising, as one can plainly see in the huge number of games (board, roleplaying or video type) featuring them, either in a star or supporting role.

Supporting this theory is *OHMU War Machine* (OHMU stands for Oversized Heavy Mechanized Unit), a new wargame coming to us from TBA Games of England. "New" is actually a misleading term, since the rulebook has been available for the past year. According to TBA Games, *OHMU* is now distributed in North America, hence the need for this review.

OHMU War Machine is a wargame, using models and a miniature terrain. It is not a boardgame, nor does it feature any roleplaying element. The rules seem geared toward medium to large battles, with minimum information on each vehicle and movement accomplished "per squad" instead of per unit (with the exception of the largest vehicles, that is).

The cover of the book is drab and functional, with a walker striding past what seems to be an Ogre (from the game of the same name, by Steve Jackson Games). Whether this similarity is intentional or accidental, impossible to say, but several elements throughout the book seem to suggest the authors have played or seen the classic SJG boardgame.

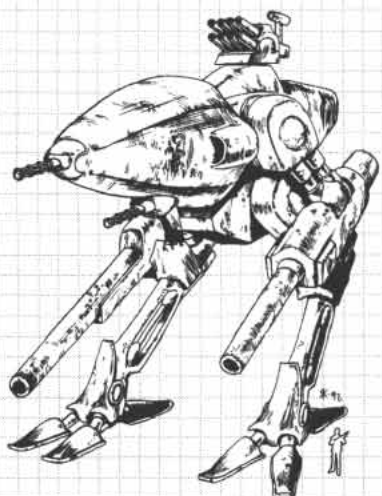
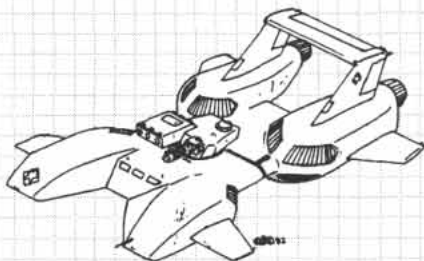
The book opens with a short introduction explaining the genesis of the game, along with a two-page overview of the background, which, if unoriginal, provides a good setting for generating scenarios. The vehicle types are standard for a futuristic wargame and include tanks, hovercrafts, powered armors, mecha, and several others. Another wink at *Ogre* was the cybertank, which could have been overlooked if it didn't look so much like its American cousin. As it is, however, fans of *Ogre* will probably spot it immediately.

The rules themselves confirmed the reviewer's first impression: this is definitely a military wargame, closer to historic simulations than the traditional sci-fi games. The use of scale terrain and the metric system will probably be familiar to the wargamer.

A concept which is central to the game is the Command, Control and Communication (C3) rule. It is a good idea but proved difficult, even annoying, to play properly. The C3 rule assigns Command Points to leader units then distributes them to other units in an effort to emulate the "fog of war" and the military chain of command. What started out as a great simulation turned out to be frustrating to players because they could not move the units they wanted the way they wanted, much like they are used to do in other games. This, however, will probably not discourage the hardened wargamer.

The last third of the book is made of army lists for all major world powers, as described in the background overview. These lists are very important to the game since there are no construction rules of any kind for the vehicles. You must choose a nation and use only the vehicles provided, yet another wargame characteristic.

Overall, *OHMU War Machine* is a good, if uninspired, effort at a futuristic war simulation. If you are the kind of player who likes traditional wargames and following reality as much as possible, then chances are you will like this game. If you're not, then pass up this one: it's probably not what you are looking for.



SILHOUETTE

By Gene Marcil and Stéphane I. Matis

Last issue, we took a look at *Heavy Gear*, the upcoming mecha game background by Dream Pod 9. *Heavy Gear* is the first game to use the *Silhouette*™ game mechanics, which are introduced in this article.

The origin of *SILHOUETTE*

While enjoying a late night snack with our gamer friends, talk around the table often involves the latest game, campaign or game system we played/saw. In September 1993, a similar discussion turned into a debate at the old lanus offices. The roundtable involved most of the Dream Pod 9 design team and the debate's focus could be stated as: "What makes a good Mecha-oriented game?"

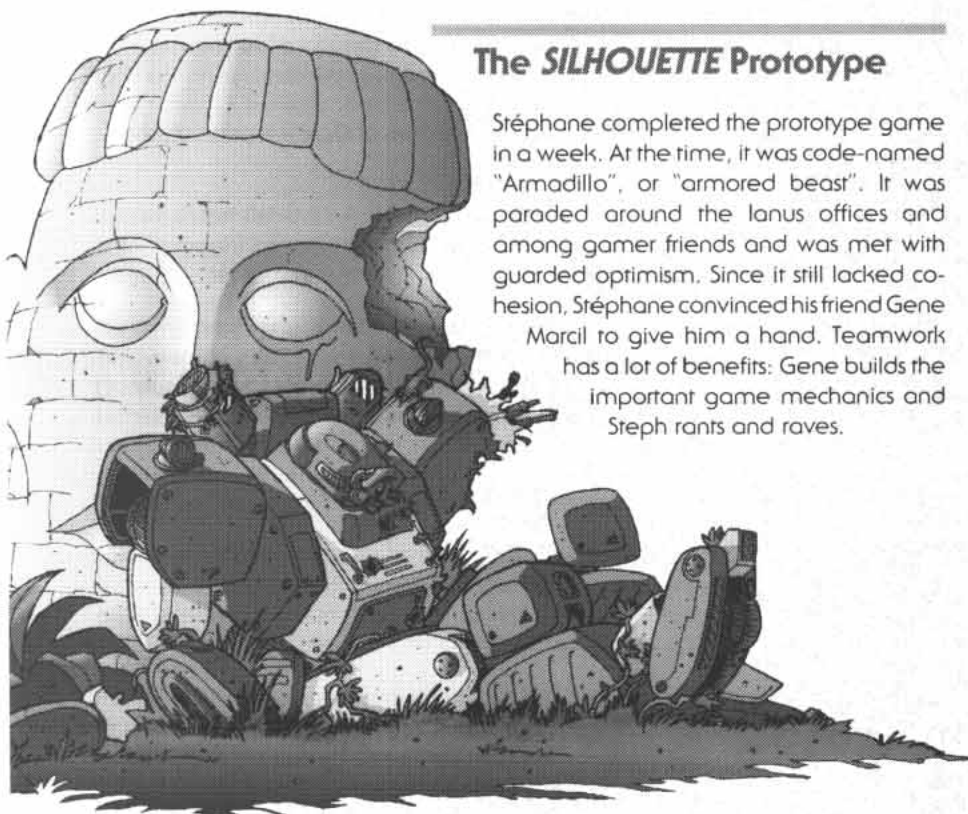
Arguments were stated and supported by all the participants. It looked like we would never have consensus and were doomed to repeat this verbal match at some other time. Then someone said, "Of course, we use 'House Rules' in our games."

As you play a game long enough, you will add small modifications to suit your own style. These so-called 'House Rules' become part of your game experience. With all the tinkering you do to meet your needs, you soon realize that you are not even playing the original game. And that was the point we all agreed on.

But if this was true, then nobody was quite satisfied with what they played. We kept that in mind and began to plan a new game system, which would later become *Silhouette*.

The *SILHOUETTE* Prototype

Stéphane completed the prototype game in a week. At the time, it was code-named "Armadillo", or "armored beast". It was paraded around the lanus offices and among gamer friends and was met with guarded optimism. Since it still lacked cohesion, Stéphane convinced his friend Gene Marcil to give him a hand. Teamwork has a lot of benefits: Gene builds the important game mechanics and Steph rants and raves.



- By October, ideas and request filtered down from all around as the rest of the team got into the act. The following goals were set forth: "Make the system simple and small. Rules to handle and maybe mesh boardgaming and roleplaying. Build it generic." We certainly had our work cut out for us.

- To achieve the stated goals, we needed to simplify the most time-consuming aspect of gaming: combat. Our answer: "Function over Form."

Function over Form

"I don't care where your Gear got hit, mister! Can you keep up with the rest of the unit?!"

**- Major Falcone
10th Cavalry**

Confederated Northern City-States

- Players are often confronted by armed enemies in games. These opponents can simply carry a knife or they can be commanding a spaceship of immense military power. When the player attacks the opponent, the game system comes into play by generating an appropriate and hopefully realistic result.

- Traditionally, this meant marking off damage on a Hit Point scale or consulting a table which detailed the opponent. We felt that neither system gave optimum results. The Hit Point method ignored other possible effects of an injury, while a system with dedicated tables could not adapt to new opponents and equipment without adding a goodly amount of new tables and rules — i.e., more game books.

- For *Silhouette*, our compromise marries the two traditional methods. We use short tables to decide what general system has been damaged and track damage for each. Thus we are able to say that your vehicle is slower by so much, but we do not bother giving the exact spot where it was hit. There are two positive effects. The boardgame players can dismiss a lot of the paperwork and keep playing, and the roleplayers can enhance the story by describing the effect as visually as they want. We call this method "Function over Form".

A demonstration

To help you grasp how much detail, or lack of, is in *Silhouette*, let's borrow a French military satellite. Don't worry, we will only borrow it for a couple of minutes.

Here, you take the controls. Ok, we are looking for some military action. Zoom on northern Algiers. Stop! We don't need to read the brand of cigarette that infantryman is smoking! Zoom out a little. A little more...

Ok, that looks good. Flip the switch to your left, the one marked 'coordonnées'. Well, will you look at that! Hexes! We wonder what the other NATO partners would think if they found out France was using hexes instead of military grids. No matter, we gamers like hexes, so it's fine. If you think the transmission is a little choppy, it is. We are getting a frame per thirty seconds, but that is good enough for our purposes.

Ok, let's inventory what we see here. The database identifies the silhouette of those tanks as French. Curious, no other detail. The other group, to our far left, seems to ID the same. Probably a military exercise, so let's patch into their communications and electronic judge. Oh, and we'll translate the lingo on the fly.

Ok, the gist of it is that the Red team, to our right, is fighting the Blue team, to our far left. Oh! Did you see that! That Blue tank fired and hit! Ok, the babble from Red leader is directed at the target tank. He is inquiring about the Red tank's status. Hmm, it sounds like some loss of speed due to shock to the driver, but all is nominal. The round must have deflected off this new armor of theirs. The rumors says it's that superplastic the hairstylist sold to them. Still, pretty lucky.

Well, there they go rolling across the land. Pretty fast! And there they go again. Nice shot. That one is a one-shot kill — straight through the vehicle. Pretty good view of the action from up here, eh? You see every tank, you hear the commander and you see what happens when you fire those large guns. It's one of three things: the attack is deflected, you get damaged, or it is an instant kill.

It is pretty much what we have in *Silhouette*. Fifty-meter hexes, 30 sec turns. That gives you plenty of room to maneuver. As we zoom out, we only watch from afar the exact results. We couldn't see at this magnification, where that tanks got hit, but we knew the first one had slowed down and that the second one was destroyed. If we wanted, we could up the magnification to see more.

Well, the same goes for *Silhouette*. Why worry about the exact detail, from this magnification, we know exactly which side is ahead in this fight ... at least so far. And it is still possible to take a closer look... but only if we need to (for repair or roleplaying, for example).

Simple and Small

Those words are deceptive. Something that is simple and small usually takes so much longer to design. Our first concern was to keep the numbers small and easily manageable. We chose the good old fashioned six-sided die and a simple way of adding it up:

When asked to roll dice, each player rolls as many dice as his Skill Rating and modifies this with bonuses and penalties. The result of a die roll is the highest valued single die. If it is six (6), and there are other sixes, each additional six (6) adds +1 to the total.

The following table gives a brief run-down of skill levels and their significance.

Skill	Rating/Number of dice
Unqualified	0
<i>Anyone without the skill</i>	
Rookie	1
Qualified	2
Veteran	3
Elite	4
Legendary	5+

This standard remains the base for both boardgame and roleplaying. Attributes are handled like modifiers, with the average physical and mental attributes rated zero (0). We felt that variations on attributes are important and common in roleplaying, but they affect boardgame combat little. With the average being zero (0), that's one less number to worry

about — unless you got a veteran or an incompetent at the controls, which do modify the roll!

Why the name "SILHOUETTE"?

Originally we were out to write a great mecha-oriented game. Along the way, the mechanics proved themselves easy to bend and modify, and a morphable game was born. Testament to this is *Project A-Ko: The Roleplaying Game*, which is going to use a slightly simplified version of the *Silhouette* system (called *Silhouette-A*). *Project A-Ko*, for those who may not know, is a Japanese animation that even by the Japanese's standards is a spoof. Here you have the daughter of two famous superheroes tossing around tanks like beachballs in a fight with a genius villain in a minimal powersuit. Yet *Silhouette*, with a reduction in reality, can handle the situation.

Reality often needs to take a backseat to make a game easy to play and entertaining. Often, the game's background will bend rules of nature to improve the storyline. To simulate this, *Silhouette* has a number of options that we designers call the Reality Distortion Factors. Such factors are used during vehicle combat, as in the effect of armor; during roleplaying character creation, to see how powerful the characters are and so on. Each RDF is optional, unless a published background requires it, like *Project A-Ko*.

So what does this have to do with a "Silhouette"? Simple. The game engine is an outline, a shadow. It is flexible and adaptable, yet defined. The interior is black, which means it is ready to be filled up with tons of neat detail and background stuff.

CONCLUSION

We believe *Silhouette* is fun and playable. It does nothing really new, but instead pays attention to the parts that make it whole. Other than *Heavy Gear* and *Project A-Ko*, watch for other Dream Pod 9 productions using this system.

OGRE: CYBERWALKERS

by Marc A. Vézina

The first Cyberwalker was originally an attempt by the Nihon engineers to build a large manned mecha for use in the treacherous terrains of Southern Asia (see *Mecha Press* #12 for more explanations on this alternate OGRE universe). The final result was much too complex to be managed effectively by a human team, so a slightly modified cybertank computer was installed instead. The result was far more than what the engineers had originally set out to accomplish. The new unit was slower and more fragile than a regular tracked cybertank, but it was more flexible and could function much better in broken and mountainous terrain.

The first three Kumo (Spider) prototypes made a sensation when they appeared on the battlefield. Soon, both the North American Combine and the Paneuropean Federation had set up crash development programs to counter this technological advance.

The typical Cyberwalker looks just like an OGRE with legs instead of treads. Like their tracked brethren, they are bristling with weapons and almost impervious to attacks. Their massive legs enable them to casually stroll over low obstacles, while climbing claws and fusion jets make them excellent climbers.

By the end of the Last War, Cyberwalkers were used whenever the terrain was unpassable by conventional armor or OGRES. They were almost never used in open terrain where their slow speed proved fatal most of the time. In mountainous or broken terrain, however, they were almost unstoppable.

Nor many survived to the Factory States era. Cyberwalkers are complex and fragile pieces of equipment and seldom did they find technicians with the know-how to make repairs. As a result, most Cyberwalkers fell to poor maintenance and "exhaustion" in the years following the end of the war.

MOVEMENT

Unless mentioned, all rules from OGRE Miniatures apply to Cyberwalkers. Each Cyberwalker must have a center point in the middle of its body (see Cyberwalker Miniatures). Unlike OGRES and other armor units, a unit is considered in overrun combat with the Cyberwalker if it touches any part of the figure, because a Cyberwalker is considerably more flexible and maneuverable than other units.

Cyberwalkers may not enter buildings. They may, however, move near and kick them, causing as many damage points as their size divided by two, every turn.

Cyberwalkers use Leg Units. These are similar to an OGRE's Tread Units and function exactly the same way. A Leg Unit represents the current status of the Cyberwalker's legs and articulation. They are always attacked at 1-1 odds since they are so well-armored. Once all Leg Units are gone, one or more legs will fail and the Cyberwalker will crash, causing one 1-1 attack to each of its systems. Assuming it survives, it cannot move. However, it can continue to fight normally.

Cyberwalkers move at normal speed in clear terrain and get the usual 2" road bonus. If the road is blocked by a size 5 or smaller unit, they may ignore it; they may also use their legs to shove any unit under size 6. Cyberwalkers are unaffected by streams, and they can enter water (use the same rules as for OGRES underwater). They move at half speed in swamp, rubble, forest, town, or underwater. Cyberwalkers never get stuck in swamp—they can climb/jump their way out.

Cliffs of one level are no obstacle and may be ignored. Cyberwalkers may go down higher cliffs by spending 1" of move for every three levels, or part thereof, after the first. Climbing a cliff cost 2" of movement for each full 3 levels or part of, after the first.

COMBAT

Cyberwalkers use the same combat rules as the other vehicles in OGRE Miniatures, with a few exceptions.

Cyberwalker weapon systems have their strength doubled in overrun attacks, just

like normal OGRES. Cyberwalkers may never be rammed, as they simply step out of the way! They do not ram either: they stomp instead. A stomp follows the same procedure as a ram, but a hulk always remains—the Cyberwalker can't put as much pressure on one foot as an OGRE on its treads. A Cyberwalker stomping loses Leg Units in the same way as an equivalent-sized OGRE.

Line of sight is measured from the top of the Cyberwalker's miniature (generally three inches off the ground). Because of this, Cyberwalkers have a line of sight similar to a Laser Tower, and can fire over or behind forest or level 1 cliff, provided the target isn't directly adjacent to the cliff. Because of their height, Cyberwalkers attack cruise missiles as if they were Laser Towers—i.e. a roll of 9+ on two dice.

Cyberwalkers can claim hull-down concealment from cover half as tall as the miniature. They are assumed to crouch or otherwise lie low behind the cover.

WALKER MINIATURES

As for mecha, Cyberwalkers are not part of the official OGRE universe. Unlike mecha, however, there are no equivalents in other gaming universes, which means that miniatures are not available.

An appropriate model is not hard to find, though. Look around in toy stores for something that might do the trick, or use modeling clay—or even cleaning pipes—to create a reasonable approximation.

Modelers may wish to go a step further and sculpt their Cyberwalker in modeling clay, which can then be fired in an oven. With a wire skeleton for support and bits of old plastic models, one can create a good-looking miniature with very little effort.

CW Rocket Launcher

Attack: 3 Range: 8" Defense: 2

These are reloadable missile launchers, very similar to the ones used by missile tanks. The missiles cannot be targeted separately as they are contained in ammunition bays deep within the body of the Cyberwalker. They are available every turn for firing.

"THE FIRST"

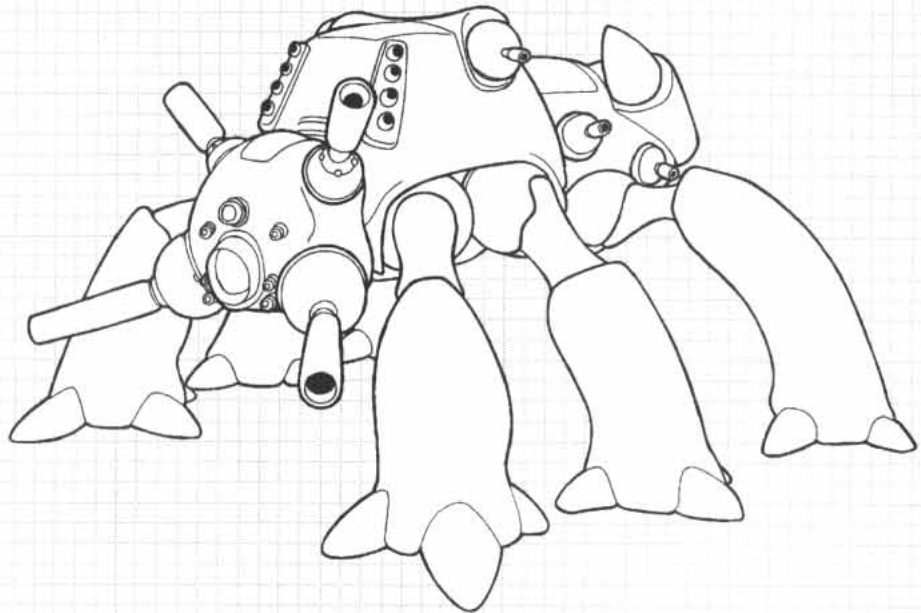
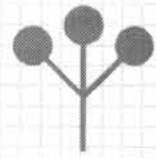
When the first Cyberwalker walked out of the Osaka production facilities, one of the generals present exclaimed that it looked just like a giant spider. The name stuck, and what was originally identified as Experimental Cybertank Type 56 became the Kumo (Spider).

The Kumo was innovative in more ways than one. Apart from the fact that it was the first cybertank with legs, it was also one of the first to mount missile launchers similar to the ones used by the more conventional missile tanks. These were installed because it was felt that the fragile Kumo needed the extra range of the missiles to improve their chances of survival.

The Kumo carried two main batteries and two secondary batteries in a large "head" housing. The guns were articulated and surrounded the main sensor array; they looked like insect antennae as they moved in search of a prey. The main body mounted two rocket launchers and eight anti-personnel batteries on its side and top. Two large Ogre-class missiles, mounted on the sides at the rear, completed the armament.

The Kumo starts the game with 32 Leg Units and a speed of 4". It is considered a size 8 vehicle.

Nihon Empire KUMO



Nihon Empire Kumo Cyberwalker

Point Value: 100

2 Main Batteries ○○	Attack: 4	Range: 6"	Defense: 4
2 Secondary Batteries ○○	Attack: 3	Range: 4"	Defense: 3
8 Anti-Personnel ○○○○ ○○○○	Attack: 1	Range: 2"	Defense: 1
2 Rocket Launchers ○○	Attack: 3	Range: 8"	Defense: 2
2 Missiles ○○	Attack: 6	Range: 10"	Defense: 2

32 Leg Units	—	Movement starts at 4"
○○○○		
○○○○		Movement drops to 3"
○○○○		
○○○○		Movement drops to 2"
○○○○		
○○○○		Movement drops to 1"
○○○○		
○○○○		Movement drops to 0"

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North American Combine LEVIATHAN

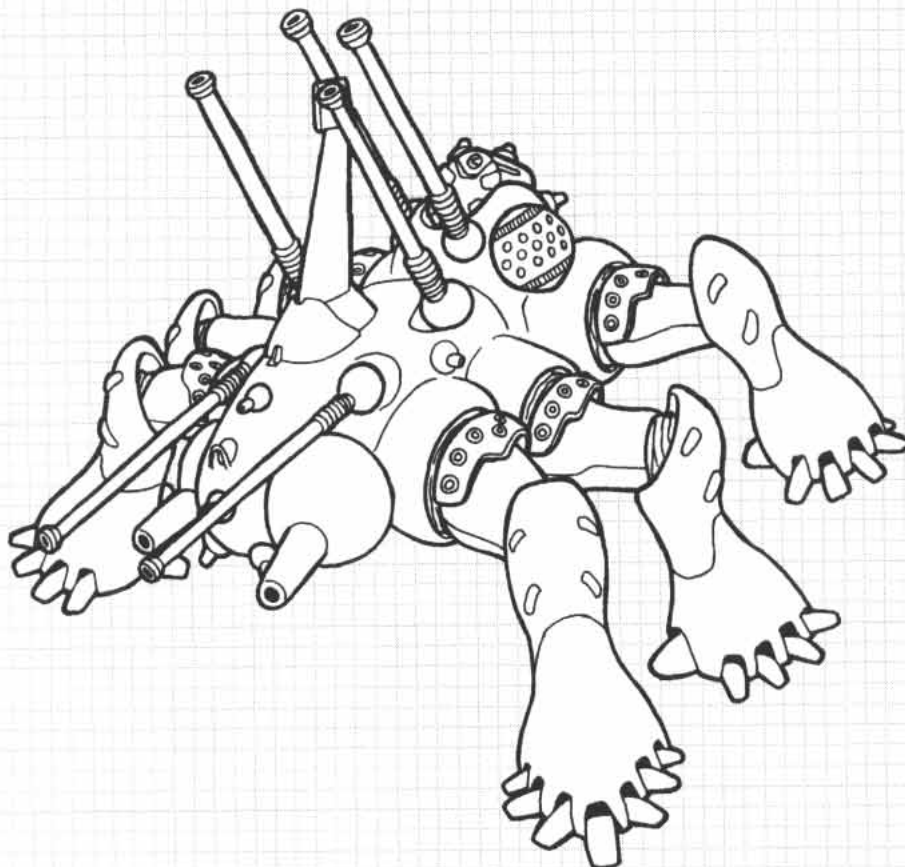


"THE BIGGEST"

The Leviathan was the biggest Cyberwalker ever built. To cut the development time, the engineers based the Leviathan on the proven Ogre Mark V tracked chassis. Combine developers placed emphasis on armor and firepower, reasoning that speed did not matter in the broken terrain where the Leviathan was intended to serve. The result was a sluggish and monstrous cousin of the mighty Mark V.

The Leviathan carried two main batteries, six secondary batteries, two rocket launchers and one missile rack with four missiles in an internal storage bay. The missile pack was placed at the far rear and stored the missiles in a "revolver" type ammo drum which could be field-reloaded in minute by a Vulcan cybertank. It also mounted ten AP batteries, two of which were mounted underneath the main body for close-in protection.

The Leviathan was heavily built and armored. As a result, it did not move very fast and its great mass made its legs only more fragile to battle damage. The Leviathan starts the game with 40 Leg Units and a speed of 4". It is considered a size 9 vehicle.



North American Combine Leviathan Cyberwalker

Point Value: 140

2 Main Batteries ○○	Attack: 4	Range: 6"	Defense: 4
6 Secondary Batteries ○○○ ○○○	Attack: 3	Range: 4"	Defense: 3
10 Anti-Personnel ○○○○○ ○○○○○	Attack: 1	Range: 2"	Defense: 1
2 Rocket Launchers ○○	Attack: 3	Range: 8"	Defense: 2
1 Missile Rack ○	—	—	Defense: 4
4 Missiles ○○○○	Attack: 6	Range: 10"	—

40 Leg Units —	Movement starts at 4"
○○○○○	
○○○○○	Movement drops to 3"
○○○○○	
○○○○○	Movement drops to 2"
○○○○○	
○○○○○	Movement drops to 1"
○○○○○	
○○○○○	Movement drops to 0"

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"THE FASTEST"

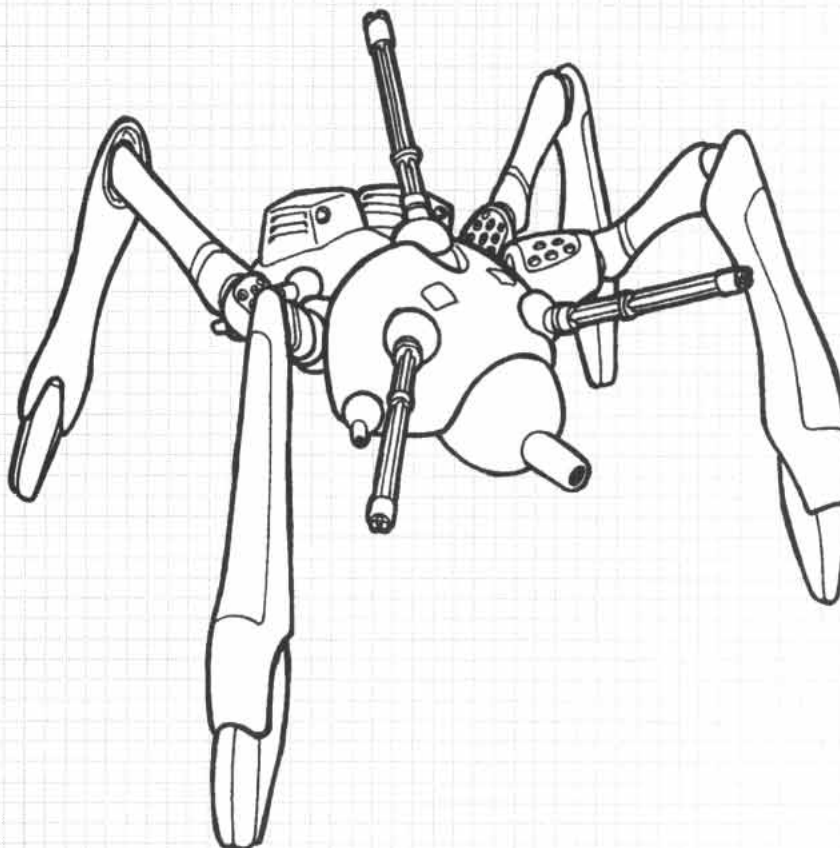
The Paneuropeans had seen the Kumo in action in Asia. They knew that a Cyberwalker was an even bigger target than an Ogre: they did have the length of one, plus additional height! Speed and flexibility were the keys to survival. As a result, the Cyclop — so named after its single main battery — carried less armament than other designs, but was much faster.

The Cyclop's legs were long and thin, and as such prone to damage. However, they afforded the machine exceptional speed and arachnid-like agility which often astounded onlookers. Nihon and Chinese forces in Asia nicknamed the Cyclop "Kumo-Chan", or "cute little spider". Combine forces were more practical and referred to Cyclops as BEMs: "Bug Eyed Monsters".

The Cyclop mounted one main battery, three secondary batteries and six AP batteries. Two missile racks with ten missiles in an internal storage bay in the rear body completed its armament.

The Cyclop starts the game with 30 Leg Units and a speed of 6"; it was the fastest Cyberwalker on the battlefield. It is considered a size 8 vehicle.

Paneuropean Federation CYCLOPS



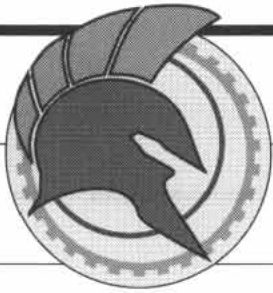
Paneuropean Federation Cyclops Cyberwalker

Point Value: 80

1 Main Battery ○	Attack: 4	Range: 6"	Defense: 4
3 Secondary Batteries ○○○	Attack: 3	Range: 4"	Defense: 3
6 Anti-Personnel ○○○ ○○○	Attack: 1	Range: 2"	Defense: 1
2 Missile Racks ○○	—	—	Defense: 4
10 Missiles ○○○○○ ○○○○○	Attack: 6	Range: 10"	—

30 Leg Units	—	Movement starts at 6"
○○○○○		Movement drops to 5"
○○○○○		Movement drops to 4"
○○○○○		Movement drops to 3"
○○○○○		Movement drops to 2"
○○○○○		Movement drops to 1"
○○○○○		Movement drops to 0"

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JOVIAN CHRONICLES: JAF UNIFORMS

by Marc A. Vézina

Like all military organizations in the history of Mankind, the Jovian Armed Forces use uniforms to differentiate and identify the various services and ranks within its organization. These uniforms also serve to instill pride in the men and women in the service of the Jovian Confederation.

ORIGINS

The first uniforms worn by the inhabitants of the Jovian stations were company jumpsuits. When the colony became independent, the jumpsuit, slightly modified, was for a time the official uniform of the fledgling JAF.

There was no change for the next fifty years. In 2157, the JAF decided to commission the creation of a specific uniform in an effort to better its public image. It was composed of loose fitting light gray fatigues, with rank insignia on the right shoulder and unit affiliation on the left. A pair of ankle-high black boots completed the uniform.

This remained the standard JAF dress for twenty-two years. Over the years, insignia were added and other removed but the general look did not change. In 2179, the JAF asked for a new uniform design, better adapted to the needs of the troops and officers. In particular, soldiers wanted a uniform they could wear under a spacesuit or in a cockpit. This uniform is the one still used today.

ENLISTED MEN

The enlisted men and women share the same general design for everyday use. The uniform is designed for comfort and

resistance first, since it is worn under a flight suit or in an exo-suit.

The basic uniform is made of pale blue-gray pants, black boots and a long-sleeved black undergarment. The pants are made of a special synthetic fiber that isolates the body from extreme heat or cold. It is also tear-resistant and still allows the skin to breathe freely. The boots have reinforced soles and are extremely resistant to scratch and minor damage. They are made out of synthetic leather-like material and extend to mid-calf.

The black undergarment is made of a durable, slightly elastic fiber that keeps unwanted humidity and heat away from the body. A small rank badge is sometimes added to the shoulders in case the soldier prefers to remove his jacket.

The jacket is worn over the undergarment. It is colored pale blue-gray, the same color as the pants, and is made of the same material. A black band covers both shoulders. The front of the jacket is made of two flaps which covers each other, the left flap being the topmost. Four Velcro strips close the jacket, and medium blue-gray piping lines the edges.

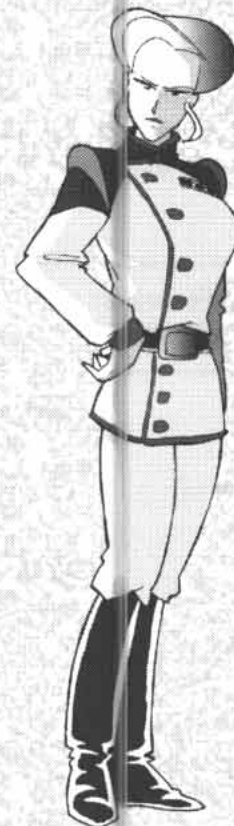
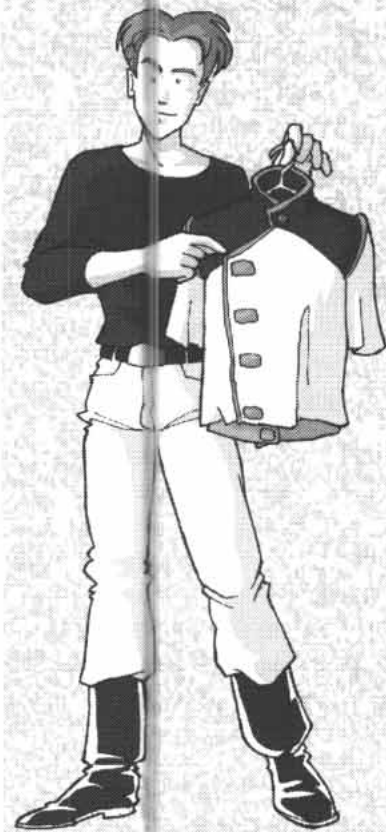
A small rank pin is used to close the collar of the jacket. It was deliberately made small to lessen the difference between

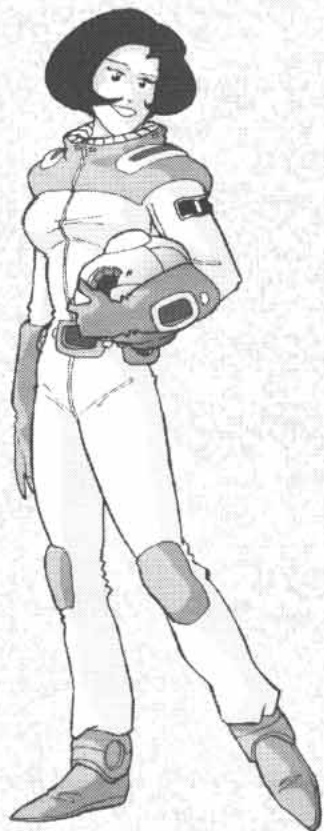
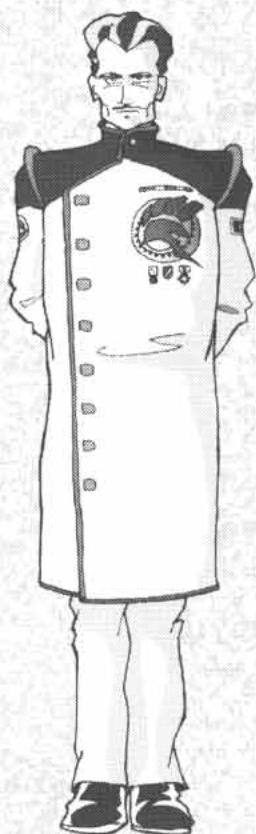
JAF Uniform

Pants, jacket and boots provide SP3 to all body locations except head.

JAF Duty Jumpsuit

Jumpsuit provides SP4 to all body locations except head. Workboots are SP5.





ranks. For a complete list of ranks and rank pins, the reader is referred to the **Europa Incident** sourcebook.

WARRANT OFFICERS

Warrant Officers wear the same basic uniform as enlisted men. When at work on ships or in the hangars (or any dirty places), they often exchange it for a long-sleeved jumpsuit and heavier boots. The jumpsuit is light blue-gray with multiple pockets; rank is indicated by a small patch on the shoulder.

OFFICERS

The base of the officers' dress is the same as all other Jovian uniforms: pale blue-gray pants, black boots and undergarment. The jacket is very different, though. It has long sleeves and ends below the waist. The front flap sports seven buttons instead of four, and a belt is added. The rank pin is moved from the collar to the left breast, along with a simplified badge of any decoration the wearer might be entitled to; the collar is kept closed by a simple metal button.

DRESS UNIFORM

Interestingly enough, there is no specific dress uniform for any of the ranks. When required for ceremonial purposes, all soldiers don a longer version of the standard jacket which extends to mid thigh.

Since no belt is used, the jacket falls straight. The JAF helmet insignia is displayed on the left breast, with any decoration pinned just under it. A rank badge is attached to the left shoulder, while the unit badge is found on the right.

The usual boots are replaced by shorter ankle-high models, worn under the pants.

FLIGHT SUIT

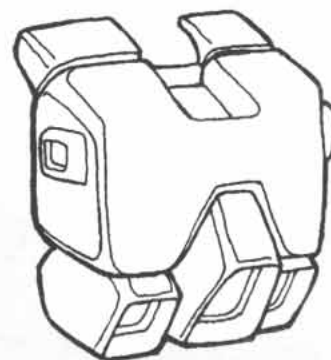
The flight suit is worn by all exo-armor and astrofighter pilots. It is a light-weight space suit, light gray in color. Composed of multiple layers of composite material, the suit is capable of limited self-sealing and provides some protection against radiation. A rank badge is attached to the left shoulder, while the unit badge is found on the right.

The shoulders are covered with reinforced pads. The collar hooks into the helmet, which is light but strong. The helmet includes a VR faceplate which is linked with the main computer by a small interface cable plugged in the lower left side of the helmet. It also contains a short range communicator and a three-minute independent oxygen reserve.

A small backpack is stored underneath the seat or nearby the pilot in all Jovian vehicles. In addition to a standard oxygen recycling unit, the pack is equipped with a very limited maneuver capacity and a screen generator.

JAF Flight Suit

Flight Suit provides SP7 to all body locations except head. Helmet is SP8 and contains communicator (range 100 km) and a three-minute air supply. A backpack-mounted screen generator protects against all natural radiation for ten hours, then must be recharged. The backpack also contains 12 hours of oxygen. The pack allows limited maneuver (MA equals to zero-G skill; fuel for one minute of continuous use).



Flight Suit Backpack

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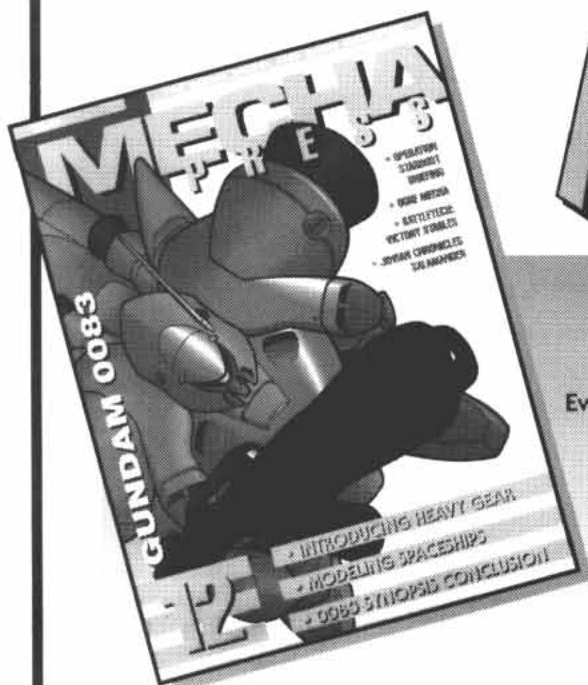
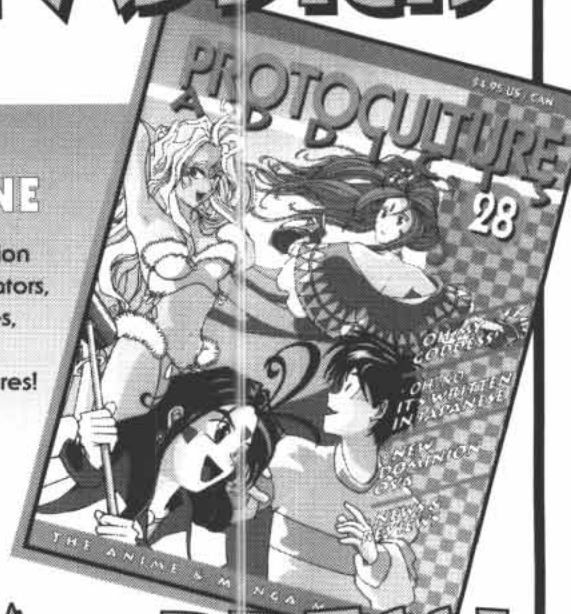
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JOVIAN CHRONICLES

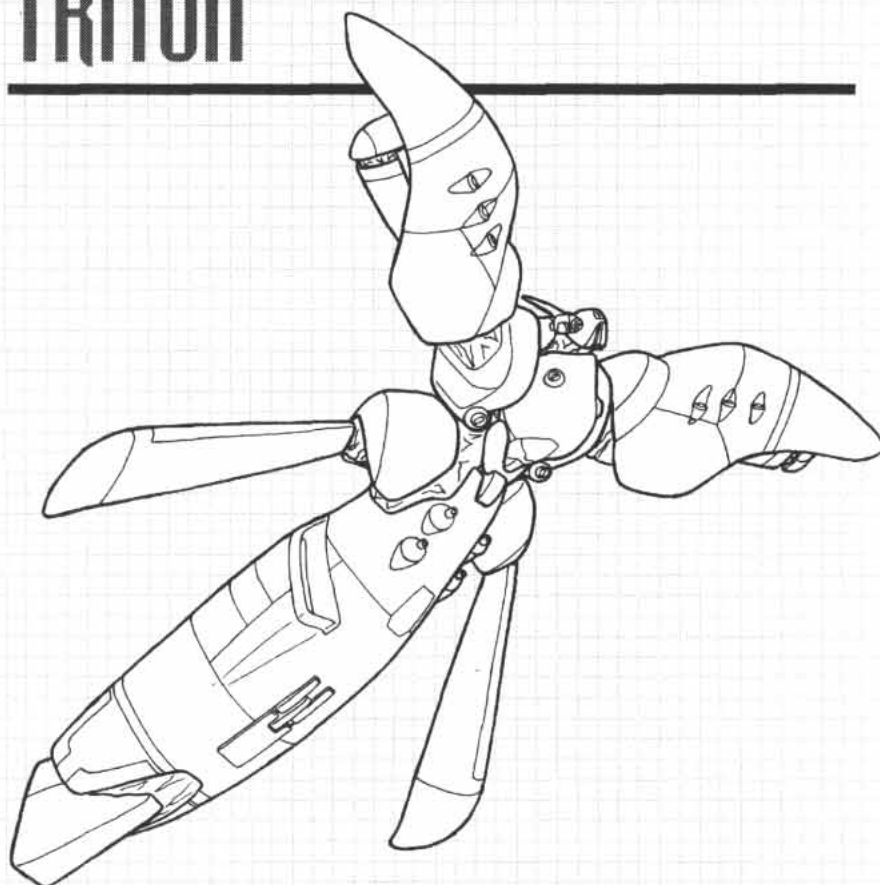
By Marc-Alex Vézina

One of the main duties of the CEGA Army is to oppose the various rebel movements which seek to prevent the complete dominion of Earth by the CEGA. In recent years, the rebels started to use submarines to attack supply ships and disrupt the economy. Hiding out in old marine farms and disaffected research stations, the rebels have been fairly successful until now.

Once again, the Army engineers turned to the faithful Syreen design to develop a new weapon to counter the rebel threat. By substituting a standard "caterpillar" water drive to the usual thruster assembly and streamlining the resulting vessel, the Syreen was converted into a powerful one-man submarine capable of lightning fast movement and agility.

The exo-armor's internal structure was slightly reinforced to withstand water pressure. New sensors were installed as well as noise dampers to make the Triton — as the new unit was called — as silent as possible. Missiles were replaced by torpedoes and the ACDLS was adjusted for its new environment. Fifteen Tritons have been built up to now. If they prove successful enough, a more advanced version will probably be put into production.

CEAM-01A TRITON



Name: CEAM-01A Triton
Tonnage: 36.9
Pilot Name: various

Ground MA: N/A
Water MA: 14**
Maneuver Value: -6

Actions Bonus: -
Scale: 1/1
CPs: 73.3

COMPONENTS

Servo Location	Level	Kills	Armor	Type	SP
T	S	6	LW	S	2
Head	SL	1	LW	S	2
R&L Arms	LW	3	LW	S	2
R&L Legs	LW	3	LW	S	2
-	-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-	-
Powerplant	MW	1	-	Hot+1	-
Hydraulics	-	8	-	Standard	-

EQUIPMENT

Name	Kills	Game effects
Escape Pod	-	Last Chance!
Link	-	Torpedo
Water Protection	-	see Techbook
High Pressure Prot.	-	see Techbook
Fans	3	Torso
Stealth	-	Noise Dampers
-	-	-

WEAPONS

Name	WA	Range	Kills/Dam	Shots	Loc	Special
Torpedo	+1	8	2/2	12*	RA, LA	6 RA, 6 LA
ACDLS	-	-	7/0	(10)	T	Portfolio 2
Laser	+1	6	0/4	-	-	BV3
Close Defense	+1	Melee	0/6	-	-	AF1
Left Claw	+1	Melee	1/1	-	LA	Quick
Right Claw	+1	Melee	1/1	-	RA	Quick

SENSORS

Type	Kills	Range	Comm	Loc
Main	4	4 Km	800 Km	H

WEAPON COST

Weapons	CPs
ACDLS	20
Torpedo	0.2 each

* This design uses the Jovian Chronicles optional rules.

** Aqua-Form bonus included

MUSCATECH HOVER-TANK 'MECH

By Prabal Nandy

The invasion of the Clan — often signaled by the presence of incredibly fast light mechs with middle to assault class firepower — has prompted the use of much recovered Star League weapons and equipment in the Inner Sphere to bolster existing forces and to create new ones capable of fighting head-to-head with the technologically superior clans. Land Air Mechs (LAMs) capable of great speed for reconnaissance and hit-and-run attacks were seen as one way to even up the struggle against the Clan. Unfortunately, all hope of using LAMs for this cause were stifled when the Clans overran the IS's only LAM factory.

But now MUSCATEchnology has come up with a worthy substitute to the LAM, the Hover-Tank Mech (HTM). The Hover-Tank Mech, using the extra speed resulting from the suspension factors of hovercraft, is able to cruise into battle at great speeds

without the use of the volatile fuels that made LAMs so costly and hazardous to use. In addition, in the intermediate Gun Emplacement mode between Hover-Tank mode and 'Mech mode, the HTM becomes a stable, two legged fire support platform with -2 to hit modifiers with all weapons. Finally, when entering battle the HTM can transform into a 'mech for maximum battlefield resilience.

CONSTRUCTION

A HTM can weigh up to 50 tons, with conversion machinery taking up 10% of that tonnage. This equipment includes the control system and fan units of the Hover-Tank mode. The engine rating and size (for 'Mech mode) is chosen and walking and running speeds are calculated as normal.

Cruise and flank speeds for Hover-mode are calculated by adding in the Suspension Factor for the appropriate 'Mech tonnage listed in the SF table for hovercraft to the engine rating of the 'Mech, and then calculating cruise and flank per normal hovercraft rules. For example, a 40 ton, 7-11 HTM (280 engine rating), has an effective engine rating in Hovercraft mode of: $280 + 175(SF) = 455$, giving it cruise and flank speeds of 11-17, a significant advantage. Round off the cruise speed to the nearest whole number if necessary.

In Gun Emplacement (GE) mode, the HTM has a movement of 1/3rd its Battlemech movement rates (round off to nearest whole number — 2/3 in the case of the 7/11 vehicle above). Jumpjets may be mounted as normal for a

HOVER-TANK MODE HIT LOCATION TABLE

Roll	Front/Back	Side (L/R)
2	CT (Crit)	LT/RT (Crit)
3	RL (Crit #1)	LA/RA
4	RL (Crit #2)	LL/RL (Crit #1)
5	RA	LL/RL (Crit #2)
6	RT	LA/RA
7	CT	LT/RT
8	LT	CT/CT
9	LA	RT/LT
10	LL (Crit #2)	RL/LL (Crit #2)
11	LL (Crit #1)	RA/LA
12	Head (Crit #3)	Head (Crit #3)

The Hover-Tank table lists some special critical effects. None of these critical effects affect the HTM in 'Mech or GE mode.

Critical Effect #1:

Make a piloting roll. A successful piloting roll results in the loss of 1MP (cruise, all others recalculated). A failed piloting roll results in the destruction of the HTM's hover jets, causing a crash and skid per Blech skid rules. No further movement is then possible for the HTM while in Hover-Tank Mode. Damage is taken as normal for the HTM in Hover-Tank mode.

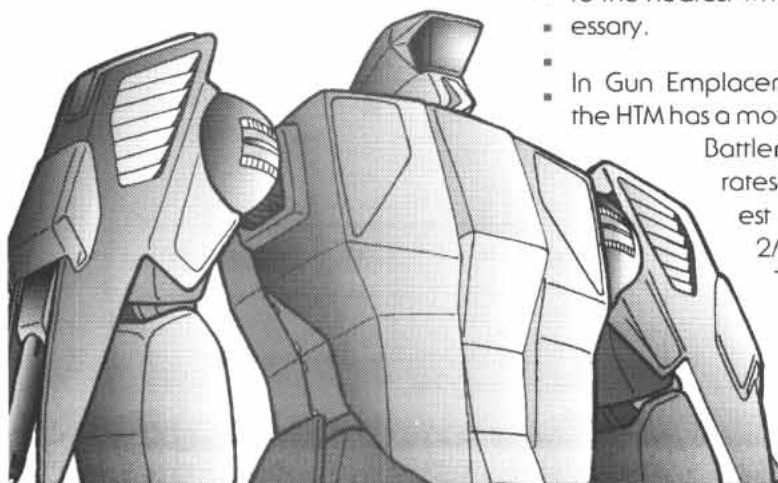
Critical Effect #2:

-1MP (cruise, all others recalculated,) due to damage to hoverjets.

Critical Effect #3:

Torso joint freezes. Forward arc weapons, including weapons on the arms of the 'Mech, may now only fire into the forward arc. When in 'Mech mode, the 'Mech may no longer torso twist.

Destruction of either leg while in Hover-Tank mode results in an immediate crash and skid.



'Mech, and jumping ability is not affected in any of the transformation modes. Each intermediate transformation requires one turn.

Hover-Tank Mechs cannot carry MASC because of the special frame and myomers used in their construction. All other advanced construction systems and material can be used without restriction other than the normal space restrictions.

FIRING AND DAMAGE

A HTM fires as normal in 'Mech mode. In Hover-Tank mode, the HTM's weapons fire as normal except that all weapons that usually fire in the forward arc of the 'Mech may now fire into the arm arcs as well. Effectively, the entire upper body of the 'Mech has become one huge limited-travel turret on top of the hip joint. In GE mode, the 'Mech retains this enhanced flexibility, in addition to a -2 modifier on all weapons due to the improved fire support base.

While in Mech or GE mode, the HTM uses the standard battlemech location table for assessing hits against it. While in Hover-Tank Mode the HTM uses a modified Hovercraft location table.

DESIGNER'S NOTES

The VHT1AHTM is a design brainstormed by MUSCATech Advanced Systems engineers in response to the loss of Inner Sphere LAM production capability, loosely based on conceptual notes left in the computers of the UCCS Vergil prior to launch. The engineers, recognizing a need for a new highspeed assault vehicle that could combine aircraft-like speeds with the battlefield durability of a 'Mech platform developed a conversion system that allowed a 'Mech, through a LAM-like transformation, to convert into a Hover-Tank

in order to use its unique movement characteristics.

The resulting 'Mech (only a small-scale prototype of which has been constructed) is able to approach a battlezone at high speeds (Hover-Tank mode) and then convert into a 'Mech for conventional combat. The intermediate form, the Gun Emplacement mode, allows the VHT1AHTM to fulfill a guardian/defense role once territory has been occupied, where its stable firing platform allows it to easily target and destroy fast moving scout mechs.

The original design parameters of the VHT1AHTM called for a very general weapons complement. The main cannon of the VHT in Hover-Tank mode was to be the powerful Starstrike Extended Range PPC, able to attack long-range targets with potent firepower and no recoil. In Gun Emplacement mode, this

weapon was to be complemented with a small laser triple cannon, mounted under a protective canopy in the left arm, ideal for attacking infantry and small mechs and benefitting from the GE mode's enhanced firing platform. Finally, in 'Mech mode, the VHT's firepower would be rounded out by a Ultra Autocannon-5 rifle carried in the right hand (requiring stowage of the ER-PPC).

In anticipation of the VHT's rapid arrival on the battle-scene, a TAG unit was added to the mech's head's sensor array to allow it to target for first-wave artillery barrages. Equipped with two wide-range, hard-hitting weapons the VHT would be able to engage targets in a wide variety of conditions and terrains, especially useful for the VHT's tactical mission as a long-range heavy interceptor.

TRANSFORMATION

Conversion	Movement Restriction	Firing Modifier
Battlemech to GE	1/2 Mech movement	+3 To hit
GE to Battlemech	1/2 GE movement	+3 To hit
GE to Hovertank	Normal GE movement	Not Allowed
Hovertank to GE	Hovertank movement	Not Allowed

CRITICAL HIT RESTRICTIONS

Critical Hit	Conversion Disabled
Gyro, Hip	Battlemech to GE, GE to Battlemech
Shoulder, Upper Arm	GE to Hovertank
Upper, Lower Leg	All conversions disabled

TERRAIN RESTRICTIONS

HTMs in Hover-Tank mode may not cross wooded hexes, though they may pass over water unimpeded.

Gun Emplacement and 'Mech modes use normal battlemech movement.

ADAPTATION FOR MECHA!

By Marc A. Vezina

Madox-01: *Metal Skin Panic* holds a special place in our hearts. It was one of the first Japanese anime, other than *Robotech*, to come to our attention. One could suppose that the incredible technical look of this video helped push us into the anime field, a fact which would cause this magazine to exist, so it's about time we give it a small tribute!

This month's Mecha! adaptation features the two powersuits used in this OVA. Powersuit design has long been an underused feature in the Mecha! gaming system, probably because players felt that they were little more than armored infantry in what was primarily a mecha combat game. The lack of design options certainly didn't help much.

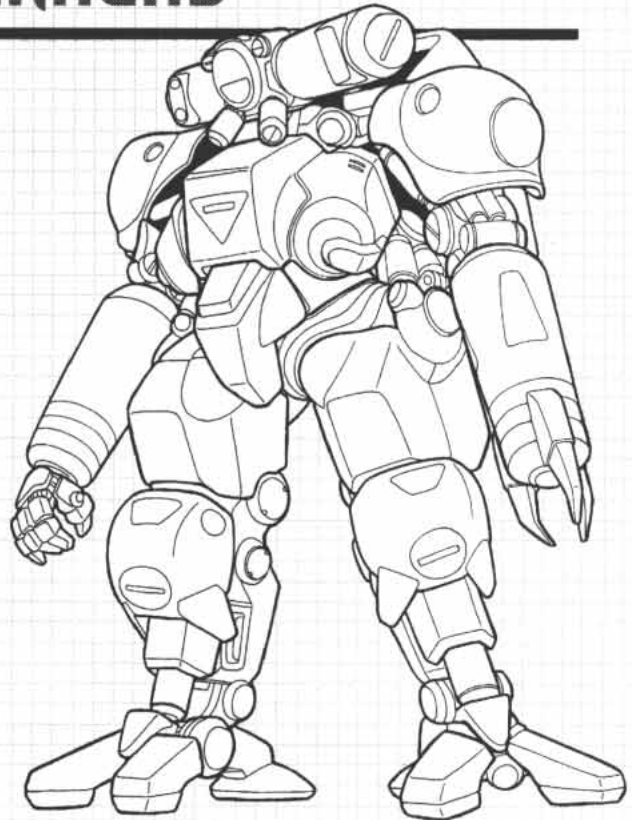
Both the Madox-01 and the Hammerhead are based on the Class III chassis, because we felt they were large enough to warrant it; moreover, this chassis would give us more design options. The stats given are not intended to accurately simulate the two powersuits, but use their distinctive appearance for game purposes. For example, the Madox-01 loses its ability to hover, but jumps instead, which is good enough for gaming (of course, its movement could be described as hovering — it's your call). The Hammerhead's grapple could not be represented either.

The Madox-01 can normally carry two TOW missiles — as seen in the test fight at the beginning of the OVA — but the rules do not allow them on anything smaller than a Class IV chassis, which is a surface vehicle design. However, if his opponent agrees, nothing prevents the player from purchasing two missiles and adding them to the Madox-01 in his force. Just don't forget to pay the point cost (5 pts for the mount + 1 pt per missile). Remember: it's your game, and the primary objective is to have fun!

Maneuver Slave ST-00

HAMMERHEAD

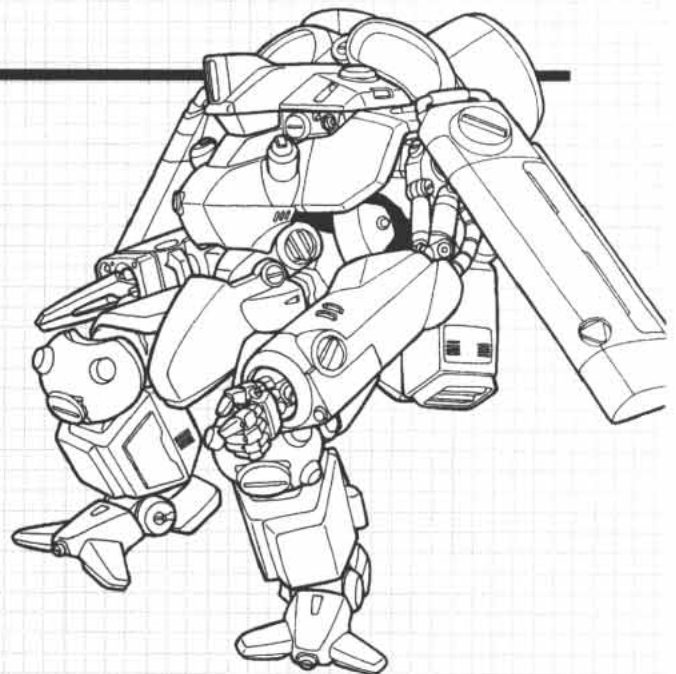
Name:	SD-00 Hammerhead
Class:	III
Point Value:	90
Missile Gun:	1D6
ROF:	2
Weapon in Batt.:	1
Turret:	N
Armor:	6
St:	6
Distance Limit:	10"
AP Ratio:	3"/AP
Suspensor Pack:	Y
Missiles:	N
Limpet Mines:	N
Ranged Bonus:	+2



Maneuver Slave ST-01

MADOX

Name:	SD-01 Madox
Class:	III
Point Value:	100
Gatling Gun:	1D6
ROF:	3
Weapon in Batt.:	1
Turret:	N
Armor:	5
St:	6
Distance Limit:	12"
AP Ratio:	3"/AP
Suspensor Pack:	Y
Missiles:	N
Limpet Mines:	Y
Ranged Bonus:	+3



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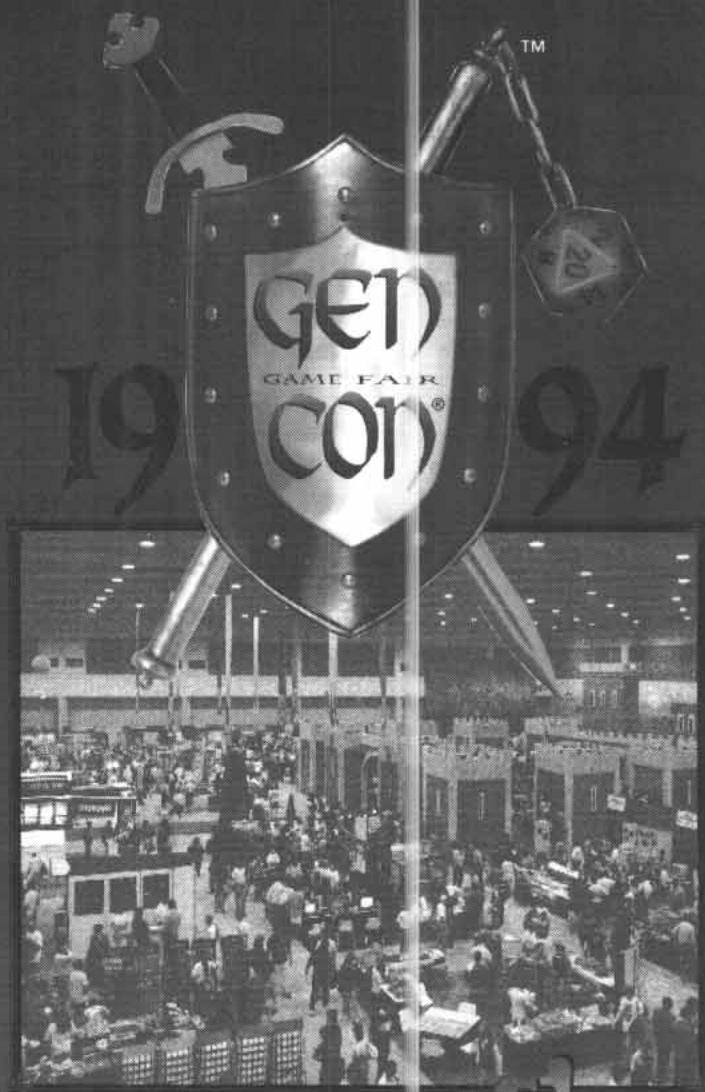
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